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Poet Lore Plays

**The Forest Warden**

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# Poet Lore

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## THE FOREST WARDEN

*A Tragedy in Five Acts*

BY OTTO LUDWIG

*Translated from the German by Paula Green, A.M.*

*To the Memory of my Foster-Father, Herr Rittergutbesitzer Julius Bertinetti,  
this translation is most affectionately dedicated.*

### THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

STEIN, *a rich mill owner and estate holder.*

ROBERT, *his son.*

CHRISTIAN ULRICH, *forest warden on the estate of Dusterwalde.*

SOPHIE, *his wife.*

ANDRES, *apprentice of forestry, and son of Ulrich.*

WILHELM, *another son of Ulrich.*

MARIE, *Ulrich's daughter.*

WILKENS, *a rich peasant and Sophie's uncle.*

THE PASTOR OF WALDENRODE.

MOLLER, *Stein's bookkeeper.*

HUNTER GOTTFRIED, *called Buchjager.*

WEILER, *Ulrich's assistant forester.*

INNKEEPER OF THE BORDER INN.

FREI, *a poacher.*

LINDENSCHMIED, *another poacher.*

KATHERINE.

BASTIAN, *Stein's valet.*

TWO PORTERS.

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## PLACE

*Hunting Lodge at Dusterwalde.  
Stein's castle at Waldenrode.  
The Border Inn.  
The Ravine.*

## TIME

*Shortly before the German Revolution of 1849.*

## ACT I

*Hunting lodge in Dusterwalde. In the background of the room a folding-door and a closet, on each side of these a door. At the right a window, at the left in the background a stove, in the front a black forest clock, a board with hooks on which hang several guns, among these are double barreled ones, also game bags, and other utensils, a bookshelf with a Bible and hymn books.*

## SCENE I

*(Music is heard behind the scene, WEILER coming in slowly through middle door, looking around; SOPHIE coming in at same time from left, busy. Then follow ANDRES, WILHELM, MARIE.)*

*Sophie.*— Here comes the music. Where in the world did I leave the key to the cellar? They must get something to drink. — Weiler?

*Weiler.*— Where is the old man? The forester, I mean?

*Sophie.*— My husband? Is he not out-doors?

*Weiler.*— I want to know on account of the wood-cutters.

*Sophie.*— Can't you wait awhile?

*Weiler.*— Wait! I guess not. I am very busy.

*Sophie.*— Well, then hurry up and be gone!

*Weiler (taking his time and filling his pipe).* Yes, I shall, when I am ready.

*Sophie.*— I wonder, whether he has already met Mr. Stein —

*Weiler.*— Indeed, Tuesday they put fresh sand on the floors, and flower garlands on the doors — and to-day they are going to celebrate the engagement of Mr. Stein to Miss Marie. Their freindship will be closer than ever, now, that they can call him father-in-law Stein! Mr. Stein bought the estate, where Ulrich is forester. The fat lawyer from town came up yesterday and drew up the contract and Mr. Stein got up this morning as the master and owner of Dusterwalde.

*Sophie.*— The tables go here —

*Weiler (helping Sophie, carrying a table to the left).*— Ulrich will have

a good time, now that his old friend is his master and will soon be his father-in-law.

*Sophie.*— More to the stove. We need one more.

*Weiler (laughing to himself).*— They are real fighting-cocks, the two of them, Stein and Ulrich! Always fighting and quarreling over something or other.

*Sophie.*— Nonsense! They are joking. (Leaving the room officiously and returning immediately.)

*Weiler (gesticulating behind her).*— Joking! Well, I declare! The one hot-headed as can be, the other as obstinate as a mule! Since that sale has gone on they do nothing but quarrel about the cutting down of the trees. The rich always think they know all, even if they don't know a blessed thing about it. Stein thinks if he has every second row of trees cut down, the first row will have more air and light and will grow the better for it. May be Buchjager found some such stuff in some old book. But Ulrich will not hear of it. Day before yesterday I truly thought they would kill each other. Stein said: "We shall hew down those trees." Thereupon my forester: "Indeed, we shall do no such thing." Stein: "But I say, it shall be done." The forester: "Indeed, it shall not!" Stein then jumped up, buttoned his coat in a jiffy, ran down two chairs, and — out he was. Now, would not anybody have thought that was the end of their friendship! By no means. That was day before yesterday; in the evening and next morning, good and early, before daybreak, who should come down from his castle, whistling and knocking at my forester's window, just as if nothing had ever happened? — Well, Mr. Stein. And of course, Ulrich had been waiting for him and was ready to open the door for him. Then they both disappeared in the woods on most friendly terms. But what do you want? Stein does not treat his boy Robert any different. Robert was about to leave him at least half a dozen times. But, then again, he can be so good, generous and kind! Well, I declare, funny people. (*During his last words he retires from the table, while ANDRES and WILHELM bring in another one, which they place against the other table at the left.*)

*Sophie.*— Here! Well! And now the chairs, boys! Weiler will — (ANDRES and WILHELM off.)

*Weiler (in a hurry, ready to leave).*— If I were not so busy! The wood-cutters are waiting — Moreover, I must look after the pine seeds and the salt — indeed, I don't know where to begin first, I am that busy. And the old man — (*indicating by gestures the forester's sternness*).

*Sophie.*— Well, I don't want to be blamed, if you get into trouble.

*Weiler (very composedly).*— All right! (*putting his finger to his nose*). I wonder whether this time Stein will again make the advances. Now that

he is the forester's master! Well, I don't like to prophesize, but — the master is always in the right, because he is the master. Well! Well! Well! If they ever should have a serious falling out! Anyhow, I am tired of seeing merry faces all the time.

*Sophie* (bringing in chairs with WILHELM and ANDRES).— Seven, eight, nine. (Counting again silently.)

*Weiler*.— Buchjager made a wry face yesterday, you must have had words with him, master Andres.

*Sophie*.— Words with that brute of a man? (Setting the table.)

*Andres*.— Who can hold his peace with him?

*Sophie*.— Well, it can't be undone now. But be on your guard with him.

*Weiler*.— Amen — There is not a drop of blood in that fellow that is not vicious.

*Andres*.— I am not afraid of him.

*Sophie*.— Wilhelm, go into the garden and get me some flowers, large ones that will fill the vases nicely. The Steins will soon be here with Mr. Moller, the bookkeeper —

*Weiler*.— The old bachelor?

*Sophie*.— And, Andres, will you go and meet cousin Wilkens? (ANDRES and WILHELM off.)

*Weiler*.— Wilkens coming?

*Sophie* (with emphasis).— *Mister* Wilkens? Surely, he would not stay away when his cousin's daughter celebrates her engagement!

*Weiler*.— Hm! To be sure! *Mister* Wilkens has money! The richest peasant all around. I too, once upon a time, used to be *Mister* Weiler! — That was before my creditors closed my little coffee store. Then they shut the *Mister* into the store and locked him in, and there he is, still in hiding, and now I am 'Weiler,' pure and simple. 'Weiler could,' 'Weiler will,' 'since Weiler is just here,' etc. Sometimes, if I feel like it, I get angry. It affords people a peculiar pleasure to get angry — But what's the use? Ah, here comes my lady, the fiancee. (*Marie* coming: while the following conversation is going on, the women set the table.)

*Weiler*.— Like a squirrel!

*Sophie*.— Weiler is paying you compliments, Marie. He has his own ways about it.

*Weiler*.— Well, I don't see any harm in it, whether boorish or refined, if women only smell a compliment they are satisfied. It's just like boys petting a kitten, whether they do it gently or not, it will purr.

*Marie*.— And you imagine you are petting me now, I suppose?

*Weiler*.— If you purr, then I guess so.



*Marie* (looking out of the window).— He is coming, mother.

*Sophie*.— Robert?

*Weiler*.— Then I had better be off and see to my wood-cutters, or there will be trouble with the old man. (*Exit.*)

*Sophie* (calling after him).— If you cannot drop in, I shall keep your share for you. — What a horrid old fellow! He'll never get decent manners. He once was well off and on that account your father is overlooking many things; they used to be old chums. Buchjager belonged to the same set. And after he had drunk away his fortune he went to Stein for help. (*Looking once more at the set table.*) Up here Robert's father, next to him your father. Then our good pastor. If it were not for him, Robert would have left his home long ago.

*Marie*.— Mother, last time Robert was so wild and impetuous —

*Sophie*.— Yes, last time the pastor and I had our troubles with him. (*Counting again.*) Here Mr. Moller, and down there your godfather, cousin Wilkens. Here Robert and you. Down at the end Andres and Wilhelm. How time flies! If I think back to my own engagement! I was not as happy then as I am now.

*Marie*.— Mother, I wonder, whether every girl who is to get married feels the same as I do?

*Sophie*.— Not every one has as much cause to feel as happy.

*Marie*.— But am I really happy? I feel so strange, mother, so —

*Sophie*.— To be sure, like a flower to which a dew drop is clinging. It drops its head and yet it does not feel the drop a burden.

*Marie*.— I feel as if it were wrong to leave my father — even for Robert.

*Sophie*.— The Bible says: 'Woman shall leave father and mother and cling to her husband.' — With me things went different. — Your father was already a man in his prime — no longer young but tall and straight like a pine; his beard was jet black. Many a girl looked at him and would have liked him for a husband, I knew that well enough. But he was too grave and stern; he took all so seriously and did not care for pleasure and enjoyments. It was no easy matter to get used to him. I never suffered want. And he never was harsh to me — although he acts as if he were.

*Marie*.— And did you never hope for more? For nothing more?

*Sophie*.— It would be asking too much of God to grant all that a girl's heart is asking for. It usually does not know its own mind! But here is Robert. Let us be very cheerful and happy that he may forget all his troubles.

## SCENE II

(ROBERT and the preceding ones.)

*Robert.*— Good morning, mother dear! Good morning, Marie!

*Sophie.*— Good morning, Sir fiance to be!

*Robert.*— How glad I am to see you so happy! But you, Marie? You are sad! I am so happy! More than words can tell. All morning long I have been in the woods, there, where the bushes are brightest with dew drops, I pressed through, so that the moist branches had to strike my burning face and there I threw myself upon the grass. But I had no rest anywhere. I felt as if nothing would do but cry.— And you, always happy and cheerful like a doe — you are sad — sad, to-day of all days.

*Sophie.*— She is happy, dear Robert, but you have known her since her childhood — so you ought to know that she becomes very quiet, where others would be boisterous with happiness.

*Marie.*— No, Robert, I am not sad; I only feel the whole importance of it all. All morning I felt like in a church. And —

*Robert.*— And? —

*Marie.*— And as if the thread of my life were to be snapped from down beneath me, and a new life were to begin; quite a new one. — Don't get angry, dear Robert. It seems so strange, I am frightened —

*Robert.*— A new life? Quiet a new life? It is only a continuation of our old life, Marie, but more beautiful. Here is the dear old tree, we are still beneath its branches only the tree is in full blossom.

*Marie.*— And then — I must leave father and mother! The old is passing and I cannot see the new that is to come; I must leave all the old things, so dear to me, and I cannot see my way through to the new —

*Robert.*— Why, you are not going to leave your father. Don't we all stay together. Father bought Dusterwalde for that very reason.

*Sophie.*— It is the fear that besets us in spring; we don't know whence it comes, nor why. We know in the glorious season of spring that life is soon to be more beautiful than ever, yet we are afraid. We fear our own happiness now that our dearest wish is to become true. And am I any different? I almost wish that the roast in the oven would burn, or that one of my finest plates would go to smash! Happiness is like the sun. A little shade is necessary, if we are to be happy. But I had better be off and see whether a little shade has not turned up in the kitchen. (*Exit to Left.*)

*Marie* (*looking at ROBERT in silence, then*).— Is anything there wrong with you, Robert?

*Robert.*— With me? No. Perhaps —

*Marie.*— Are you still angry with your father? He is so good and kind.

*Robert.*— That is just so. Wish his kindness were easier to bear than his most violent outbreaks of temper. His wrath is offending only, but his kindness is humiliating. Against his temper I can oppose my pride — But what can I do against his kindness?

*Marie.*— And you were about to leave us, you wicked man, to leave me.

*Robert.*— I wanted to, but as you can see, I am still here. Ah! Those were bad days. I doubted everything, even you, Marie; even my own self. But that is done with and over now. A little shade is necessary, I suppose, but not too much of it. Let us go, Marie. It is sultry in the house. Let the band play the gayest tunes. (*They are about to leave.*)

## SCENE III

(FORESTER, then his wife. Preceding ones. MARIE— as she perceives the FORESTER she leaves ROBERT and embraces her father.)

*Forester.*— Well, well — my girlie! (*freeing himself*). How much sunshine after all the rain! Did you women folk fill Robert's ears with your gossip? You stupid girl, you! (*pushing MARIE gently aside*). I must talk to Robert. I was just looking for you, Mr. Stein.

*Robert.*— Mister Stein? Not Robert?

*Forester.*— All things in their time and place. When the women will leave, I —

*Sophie.*— We are going, old bear. Go on and talk.

*Forester.*— Yes, I shall, as soon as you will be gone.

*Robert* (*leading SOPHIE to the door*).— Don't get angry, dear mother.

*Sophie.*— Angry! If I were to get angry, there would be no end of it.

*Forester.*— Close the door behind you, do you hear?

*Sophie.*— All right —

*Forester.*— Who is the master here, I should like to know?

## SCENE IV

(FORESTER, ROBERT.)

*Forester* (*as soon as they are alone, becomes awkward, goes up and down*).

*Robert.*— You wanted to —

*Forester.*— Yes, to be sure. (*Mopping his face*.) Oh, yes. Sit down, Mr. Stein.

*Robert.*— What are all these preparations for?

(FORESTER *pointing to a chair at the end of the table.*)

(ROBERT *sits down.*)

*Forester (taking the Bible from the shelf, sits down opposite ROBERT, puts on his glasses, opens the book, coughs).*— Proverbs, XXXI, 10: Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost costs is the price of her. The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils. She will render him good, and not evil, all the days of her life." (*Short pause, then in a rough voice speaking toward the window, remaining seated.*) Wilhelm, I wonder, whether you will ever learn to be careful.— And then farther down, the thirtieth verse— That fellow is going to destroy my yew hedge, the way he is going on!— "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" — Robert! —

*Robert (lost in thought).*— Yes, father Ulrich? —

*Forester.*— And again, Sirach, verse — Mr. Stein —

*Robert.*— Why *Mister* Stein?

*Forester.*— Well, because, —well, then, Robert —

*Robert.*— Why are you so solemn?

*Forester.*— Solemn? May be I am. I have every cause to be so. I am no heathen (*reassuming his solemn manner*). Well, then, you have decided in God, Robert?

*Robert.*— Yes, but —

*Forester.*— If you look at me — you wish to get married, Robert?

*Robert (looking at him in blank amazement).*— You know that as well I, I should think!

*Forester.*— To be sure, but don't you see, I have to make a speech for the occasion. So, sit down and let me talk. I have good lungs, but when I have to make a speech, I always see our good pastor before me, dressed in his gown, chasing a rabbit. (*Easier.*) Well, now, I am on the trail. A stag passes down by Lutzdorf, do you listen, Robert? Here, this salt cellar is you, and the fork here the stag. The wind comes from the direction of that plate there. Now, what would you do to steal upon the stag? What would you do? (*Helping him.*) You — well? You would —

*Robert.*— I would —

*Forester (nodding approval).*— You would have to — (*gestures*).

*Robert.*— Gain the wind from him.

*Forester.*— That's it! Now, do you see what I mean? You must gain the wind and on that account I must talk to you. (*Solemnly.*) And now, make her happy, Robert, make my Marie happy. (*About to go.*)

*Robert.*— But what has all that to do with Marie?

*Forester.*— I see, you do not understand me after all. Now mind:

the stag must not notice that you are after him, and your wife still less. You make too much ado with the women folk. Children must not know how much they are loved; by no means must they have the slightest inkling about it; and women are worse than children, they are mere children, only more cunning, and, goodness knows, children are cunning enough, as it is. Robert, sit down. I must tell you a story. (*They sit at the edge of the table, turned towards the audience.*) When Marie was four years old — not higher than that — it happened that one day I came home later than usual. Where is Marie? I asked. Some one said, 'In her room,' some one else, 'In front of the house; she will soon be in.' But, bless you, evening came, night approached, and no Marie in sight. I go out to look for her in the garden, look through the bushes, pass the cliffs, look for her all through the woods — but can find her nowhere. My wife had gone to look for her in your house, in the village, in every house but she cannot find her. Was she kidnapped? She was an angel of a child! All night we were up, for Marie was the apple of my eye. Next morning we aroused the whole village; all and every one joined in the search, — Marie has always been a great favorite with all. At least I wanted her body, I wished to bury her. You know our weird, secluded valley. Where the pine trees are darkest, under the cliffs near Laurensteg; where the rocks form a bridge across the creek; near the willows — there I creep all through the bushes. In the centre there is a small meadow — here, I see something lying on the ground, red and white. Good Lord! It is she — Marie! And not dead, no, as well as well as can be! Here she was fast asleep, with ruddy cheeks, as red as poppies. Oh, Robert! — But (*looking around, softer*) I hope she cannot hear us! (*going closer up to Robert whenever he forgets himself he speaks in a lower voice*). I asked her: 'Is it truly you?' 'To be sure,' she says, wiping her eyes. 'And you are alive?' says I 'and you have not died from hunger or fear?' I went on. 'You were in the woods half a day and a whole night; all alone in the thickest parts of it, too. Come, now,' says I, 'mother is dying from fear.' Thereupon she, 'Wait a little, Dad.' 'But why or for whom?' 'Till the child will be back,' says she, 'and we will take it home with us, please, daddy dear.' 'Which child?' I ask. 'The one who came to see me just now, when I ran away from you after the golden butterfly and when I was all alone and began to cry. It came and brought me berries and played with me, it was here just now, only a minute ago.' 'But you were a whole night out here.' This she would not believe. We looked for the child — but, of course, found none. Men do no longer believe in these things, but I know better. Do you understand me, Robert? Don't talk now. It would be blasphemy to say what I think about it. Here, shake hands,

Robert, my boy. I hope she did not hear us. (*Goes to the door and noiselessly opens it, looks around.*)

*Marie (from outside).*— Did you want anything, father?

*Forester (chuckling, to ROBERT).*— Nothing, and don't you dare to come in here, before I — (*To ROBERT, in a low voice.*) That's the way to treat them. You fuss too much with her. She is (*still lower*) a girl of whom any father has a right to be proud of, I think she will make a wife after God's own heart. I have one like that. I can tell you that much. I can tell you so, because you will not tell it back to her, for she must never know, or all my pains are lost. And I had trouble enough to train her, I assure you. — Well, I hope you will not spoil my girlie, I took such pains in bringing her up the way I wanted her.

*Robert.*— Of course, but I don't understand you.

*Forester.*— That's just it. You would not do it intentionally. But, by heavens! do not fuss so much with her, you hear? If you go on as you do now, she will do with you as she pleases. The women folk like to boss it; that's all they are thinking about, without knowing it themselves. And once they are the boss, they are none too happy for it. I know of more than one like that. I need only open the door of a house and peep in, and I know what the man is worth. I need only look at his cattle. If his dog or cat are badly trained, his children will be the same and his wife worse. Do you know, my wife does not know me yet (*pointing to his heart*) as to this. And if she knew it — well, well, — then good-bye to my authority in my own home. Let women be angels, but men bears.

*Robert.*— But what has all that to do with —

*Forester (warmly).*— No, no, Robert, no exceptions. Either he trains her, or she will train him. I'll give you an example right now. My wife cannot see people suffer, and through this peculiarity of hers she suffers misery. Now, I should like to know what would become of her, if I were to praise her for it. So I grumble and swear at her like a trooper, but all along I give in, little by little, and she can have her own way in the matter. Then when she has done so, and has given help to others, I again grumble and swear. Then people say: 'The forester is harder on the poor than the devil himself, but his wife and daughter are angels.' And they say it so that I shall hear it, and I do hear it, sure enough! But I do, as if I knew nothing and in my heart I laugh at the poor fools, but I act as if I were the devil himself. — But it seems the guests are coming. Robert, my wife and my girlie, Marie — if ever anything should happen — you understand, Robert, what I mean? Well, then, shake hands, old boy. God sees us! (*Wiping his eyes.*) The d—! Don't let the women know, and be the boss in your own home. (*Turns round to hide his emotion, expressing his anger over it by gestures. At the door he meets*) —

## SCENE V

(STEIN, MOLLER, WILKENS, MARIE, SOPHIE, *preceding ones*. FORESTER *welcoming the party*.)

*Stein*.— Whither in such a hurry, old man? Are you already on the war path with my boy?

*Forester*.— Yes, I just lectured the young gentleman on women in general.

*Stein*.— Well, if that is not what I call high treason. Why don't you let him be henpecked? It'll do him good. And do you allow such things to go on, mother-in-law?

*Forester*.— My wife is smart enough, no matter what people say, I am the henpecked one here. — But get us the cards, I promised Stein a chance to win back from me what he lost the other day.

*Stein*.— Yes, indeed, I am waiting for that chance. (FORESTER and STEIN *sitting opposite each other and playing*.)

*Sophie* (*looking on for a minute, then to ROBERT, while busy going up and down*).— If they will only keep peace to-day and not touch on the question of the trees, then all will be well.

*Moller* (*stepping to WILKENS from the left, pointing to MARIE*). She will make a beautiful bride.

*Wilkins*.— And no beggar either, sir.

*Moller* (*gallantly*).— We all know, Mr. Wilkins is her mother's cousin.

*Wilkins*.— Well, well! —

*Moller*.— And you need not be ashamed of the house Stein & Son.

*Wilkins* (*quietly*).— Certainly not.

*Moller* (*very enthusiastic*).— Sir, the firm of Stein & Son — I have been with them these twenty years. — I am proud of them. The firm is my family, my wife, my child!

*Wilkins*.— Yes, I know.

*Moller*.— The first houses in Germany would consider it an honor to marry Stein & Son.

*Wilkins*.— I believe you. (*Turning to MARIE*.)

*Moller* (*angry to himself*).— And that fellow has the true peasant's conceit. He acts as if Stein & Son ought to be proud of that little goose of a forester's daughter. His forty-five thousand dollars will go up in three parts, anyhow, and after his death, at that! Lohlein & Co's only daughter, with her eighty thousand, would be quite another match! Her money is to be ready cash from the day of her marriage and would work for our firm. That union is a terrible blunder. But what's the use? I had better— (*an organ-grinder is heard outside*) dance off my anger. May I have the

pleasure, madam (to SOPHIE) out on the meadow? (*With the grace of an old bachelor.*)

*Stein.*— I wonder when I shall get a decent hand!

*Sophie.*— Is there time enough for one round?

*Wilkens.*— I may be poor, but I can afford paying for a dance. (*Searching his pockets.*) Here's a dollar for the music. I hope, sir fiance, you will not object? (*MOLLER, leading SOPHIE, WILKENS and MARIE off, ROBERT following.*)

## SCENE VI

*Stein (throwing his cards on the table).*— Not one trump!

*Forester (announcing).*— Twenty.

*Stein (taking up his hand, impatiently).*— Why not forty? — By the way, now that I come to think of it — did you think the matter over? I mean about those trees!

*Forester.*— That fellow is a — a — (*they go on playing.*)

*Stein.*— What fellow?

*Forester.*— The one who set that idea agoing in you.

*Stein.*— I?

*Forester.*— Your Buchjager.

*Stein (getting angry, accentuating).*— My Buchjager?

*Forester (calm and easy).*— Well, mine, if you like.

*Stein.*— I should like to know why you drag him in here!

*Forester.*— Well, then don't talk of him.

*Stein.*— As if I — it is you — you, who at every opportunity bring him in. He clings to your teeth like dough.

*Forester (very calm).*— As for instance, just now.

*Stein.*— You want to make me mad!

*Forester.*— Nonsense, you began the quarrel.

*Stein.*— I? — But why do you trump me right away, if I make a mistake?

*Forester.*— A mistake means a lost game.

*Stein (throwing aside his hand).*— Well, here is the whole thing! (*Jumping up.*)

*Forester.*— I serve. (*Mixing cards and serving.*)

*Stein (advancing towards the table).*— I don't want to play.

*Forester (not allowing any interruption).*— You serve.

*Stein (sitting down).*— Obstinate old fool, you!

*Forester.*— You are altogether too excitable.

*Stein (taking up his hand).*— You'll never give in, even if you know you are wrong!



SCENE VII

(MOLLER leading SOPHIE, WILKENS. *The walse has ended. Preceding ones.*)

Sophie.— But now I should think —

Forester.— One more game.

Sophie.— Lunch is ready —

Forester.— And what about the pastor?

Sophie.— He sent word not to wait for him. He will be here in time to celebrate the engagement, however.

Forester.— Well, then, you people sit down and eat.

Stein.— Don't let us detain you.

Forester.— It does not matter where we sit, here or at the table there — Now forty. (*They continue with the game.*)

Stein.— In Heaven's name!

Forester (*triumphantly*).— Why don't you bring in Buchjager again and the trees? That would be —

Stein (*restraining himself*).— Now, you see —

Forester (*quickly*). That the fellow is an ass.

Stein.— If you please, we are not by ourselves here!

Forester (*heated from the game*). — And trump — and trump — Indeed, the idea to cut down those trees! — I guess not! —

Stein.— Now, that will do, I tell you. The idea was my own.

Forester.— And trump!

Stein.— And if I — (*restraining himself*).

Forester (*triumphantly*).— Yes? and then? (*Pushing back the cards.*)

Stein (*restraining himself with all his power, so as not to lose his control*).

And if I were to command and insist that you — that — that — then —

Forester.— That would make no difference.

Stein.— Then the trees will have to be cut down.

Forester. — I guess not!

Stein.— Sir!

Forester (*laughing*).— Mister Stein?

Stein.— Never mind! Never mind!

Forester (*very calm*).— I should say so.

Stein.— Don't say another word about the matter now!

Forester.— And no tree —

Stein (*rising*). — Do not contradict and scorn me. I have to ask you that much. I am the master of Dusterwalde.

Forester.— And I am the forester of Dusterwalde.

(STEIN'S excitement increases. He endeavors to suppress both his sensi-

tiveness and his quick temper in the presence of the party. The forester takes the matter easy, as something occurring daily. SOPHIE looks from one to the other in increasing fear. WILKENS does not move a muscle in his face. MOLLER takes his master's part by gestures. The action must be very rapid.)

Stein.— You are my employee and I order you herewith: 'Cut down those trees or you have been in my service for the longest time.'

Forester.— Old mad cap!

Stein.— Or you will cease to be my forester.

Forester.— Stuff and nonsense!

Stein.— And Buchjager will be put in your place.

Forester.— That's it! I wish you joy on the change!

Stein (*buttoning his coat*).— You understand those trees will be hewn down!

Forester.— Indeed not!

Sophie (*stepping between the two men*).— But —

Stein.— I regret very much — Mr. Moller! — Good-bye, everybody. (*Exit.*)

Moller.— Bravo! Well done! At last spoken like Stein & Son! (*Follows STEIN.*)

Forester.— I deal — (*while mixing the cards he looks up*). But, well, let him! If he cannot sit quiet for an hour without exploding like a powder-barrel!

#### SCENE VIII

(FORESTER *sitting there indifferently*, SOPHIE *standing by his chair*. WILKENS *stepping to the FORESTER.*)

Forester.— What now?

Wilkins.— You ought to have gone after him.

Forester.— Old fool!

Sophie.— I am thunderstruck! And this on the day of their betrothal!

Wilkins.— But he will not, I hope, for the sake of a few wretched trees —

Forester.— Wretched trees! The deuce! There are no wretched trees in my forest. Not one, I tell you! Don't whine for nothing!

Wilkins.— But Mr. Stein —

Forester.— Will not go far. When he has calmed down, he will be the first one, who — he is better than I.

Wilkins.— But —

Forester.— That's nothing new. For the past twenty years —

Wilkins.— But now he is your master.

*Forester.*— What has that to do with it? Master or no master. The trees will not be removed.

*Wilkens.*— Then you will lose your job.

*Forester.*— For Buchjager? Stuff and nonsense! Stein cannot bear the man, and knows only too well that he can trust me. I am not boasting; but show me a forest in our whole district which is in a better condition than mine!— Listen! Here he is coming back. Sit down and when he enters, act as if nothing had been amiss.

## SCENE IX

(*MOLLER entering in haste. Preceding ones, last ANDRES.*)

*Forester (not looking up).*— Well, I deal. (*Picks up the cards, noticing his error.*) Oh, is it you, Mr. Moller?

*Moller (solemnly).*— Yes, I.

*Forester.*— Then sit down. Has he cooled off, the hot-head? Why does he not come in? Is he waiting for me to get him? (*He is about to go.*)

*Moller.*— Mr. Stein asks you, sir, if you have thought it over?

*Forester.*— I should say so!

*Moller.*— Then you will have the trees cut down.

*Forester.*— Indeed, I shall do no such thing!

*Moller.*— That means, of course, that you resign your post.

*Forester.*— That — that you are a fool!

*Moller (very solemn).*— Mr. Adolph Friedrich Stein, head of the firm Stein & Son, commissioned me, in case you should refuse to execute his orders, to inform you of your dismissal and to notify Buchjager that he is appointed forester of Dusterwalde.

*Forester.*— And that would afford you a great pleasure —

*Moller.*— I am not concerned in the matter; I am talking of the house Stein & Son, which firm I have both the honor and the pleasure of representing. I allow you five minutes consideration. (*Steps to the window.*)

*Forester.*— Dismissing me? Do you know what that means? Dismissing a man who for forty years has served honestly? The dickens! Sir! If I were to do what he wants me to do, then — then I deserved to be dismissed. Hew down those trees! And the hill lying open to the north and northwest without any protection —

*Wilkens.*— Well, it's not a question of your trees!

*Forester.*— That the wind can blow down everything! Heavens! Oh, nonsense! He cannot mean it! If he comes to his senses he —

*Wilkens.*— Well, that's what I say too. Until the time will come to hew them down, he can change his mind a hundred times over. And you

can see that it is not a question of cutting those trees, but merely one of authority. If he is the master, of course, he has to be right.

*Forester.*— But he is wrong, and I will not sanction a wrong. For forty years I overlooked my own profit for the sake of what was entrusted to my care, and I have —

*Wilkins.*— Well, then I should think that if you have been good to your trees for forty years, you may now be so to your wife and children.

*Forester.*— And do you know this may cost Stein sixty thousand dollars worth of damages? I should rob him, if I were to consent now, and then people would say: “Ulrich agreed to it.” On the other hand, in less than fifteen years’ time a forest could stand here which would be the joy of every hunter’s heart and —

*Wilkins.*— Well, and that may still be so —

*Forester.*— Not if the confounded wind has done its work. You talk a blue streak of rot and nonsense!

*Sophie (timidly).*— But what is to become of us?

*Forester.*— WE are honest people and we shall remain so.

*Wilkins.*— Indeed, as if it were a question of honesty!

*Forester.*— But the d—, sir, what else? Your peasant morality, of course, must not touch your purse, if it costs money you had rather let things go as they will.

*Wilkins (self-satisfied).*— Yes, where the peasant is not compelled to act, he will not stir. You are right; that is our peasant morality. And I tell you, our peasant morality has sense. If you had followed it, you would have done your duty and not one ounce more than you were paid for. You would have taken your money and spent it upon your wife and children and not on an estate not belonging to you; and then it would be indifferent to you, what will become of it. You are not paid to be a master, but to be a servant. If, therefore, your master tells you: ‘The trees shall be cut down’—

*Forester.*— Then I must risk all I own to prevent such a thing. It is far more important to be an honest man than hold a good position.

*Wilkins.*— Well, here we are where we began. (*Turns around.*)

*Sophie.*— You are not leaving us, I hope? You are my only comfort, cousin. He will change his mind, to be sure. He thinks so much of your advice.

*Wilkins.*— So I see!

*Sophie.*— The engagement — Marie! — Wish our pastor were here! If you, cousin, would only — (*ANDRES enters.*)

*Wilkins.*— That fellow’s skull is made of iron. Can nobody talk sense to him?

*Moller* (who until now has been looking calmly out of the window, looks at his watch and then turns to the forester solemnly).— Sir Forester, I must ask you for your final decision.

*Forester*.— I gave it. (*Makes a few steps and stops.*) And moreover, you cannot dismiss me, even if you wanted to. He cannot dismiss me. He must first prove that I deserved dismissal, he cannot do it without a reason.

*Moller* (*with dignity*).— Then you will not give in. Speak out plainly, please.

*Forester*.— If that was not plain enough, well then: No! I cannot say plainer and clearer. I do not wish to become a rascal, and he cannot dismiss an honest man. Is that clear enough for you? I am the forester here and I shall remain so, and — the trees will and shall not be cut. Give that message to your master, and to Buchjager, if you like.

*Sophie*.— Have a little patience with him, sir; Mr. Stein surely does not mean it, and you have been so kind as to —

*Moller*.— What would I not do to please you, Mrs. Ulrich? But I am the representative of Stein & Son.

*Forester*.— If he thinks he has the power to dismiss me, let him try it! And you, woman, do not offend my right by begging. Good day, Mr. Moller. Did you wish anything else? No? Is there anything else you have to tell me?

*Moller* (*very solemn*).— Nothing, except that your position has come to an end from this very moment. Here is your salary, six months in advance — So that you will leave the lodge within three days from now the latest, that the new forester can move in, who is in charge of this forest from now on.

(*FORESTER has to sit down.*)

*Sophie* (*to ANDRES who has to be kept back and who now hurries to the door*).— Where do you go, Andres?

*Andres*.— To tell Robert about his —

*Sophie*.— Don't you dare —

*Andres*.— Let me go, mother, before I get a hold of that fellow there — (*Exit in wrath.*)

*Forester*.— Very well! Very well! Keep quiet, Sophie! (*Rising.*) Good day, Mr. Moller. You forgot some money here, sir, or shall I throw it after you? (*Steps to the window and whistles.*)

*Moller*.— You see yourself, Mrs. Ulrich, I am performing an unpleasant duty. I am going to see Buchjager now.

*Forester* (*without turning to him*).— Happy journey!

## SCENE X

(FORESTER stands by the window and whistles. WILKENS looks for his cane and hat. SOPHIE stands by, running from one to the other. MOLLER while about to leave, meets ROBERT and ANDRES, who come rushing in. MARIE clings to ROBERT's arm, trying to pacify him.)

*Robert (angry).*— He shall give in! He shall not spoil this beautiful day!

*Andres.*— Go to your father, he began the quarrel.

*Moller.*— Good that I meet you here, Mr. Stein, you are to go home right away. (*Exit.*)

*Robert.*— Ulrich, you will yield, you must do so!

*Forester (turning to the window).*— Is it you, Mr. Stein? What do you want of me? Marie, you leave us. What do you want of the man, whom your father dismissed?

*Robert.*— But why don't you give in?

*Andres.*— Because he wants to remain an honest man and because he will not be a scamp.

(FORESTER makes signs to ANDRES to be silent.)

*Robert.*— I was not talking to you, Andres!

*Forester.*— Are you here with your father's consent, Mr. Stein? Moreover, sir, even if your father had the power to remove me and could take my honor from me — he cannot take my child from me, nor her honesty. And as to — well, young gentleman, that's the point where I feel sore. Do you understand?

*Sophie.*— Will you quarrel with the last friend left?

*Forester.*— Marie has her reputation to lose. If he is a friend, he will know without me, what he has to do.

*Robert.*— I know what I have to do, but you don't seem to know or you would not risk your children's happiness for a whim — for the —

*Forester.*— Well, you had better tell all that to your father, young man.

*Robert.*— For the sake of your stubbornness! I have her promise and Marie has mine. I am a man and will not be made a scoundrel.

*Forester.*— And because you don't want to be one, I shall be a scamp! Shall people say: 'Ulrich separated father and son?' Sir, my girl is too good that it should be said of her, she got into your family by hook and crook. Mr. Stein, this is my home! You know what I mean.

*Sophie.*— Let the children at least —

*Forester.*— Make a blunder? And you will look on and do nothing but whine, when the mischief is done!

*Robert.*— Marie, whatever may happen —

*Forester.*— I don't know whether I know my girl, if I don't know her, then it were better you go right away with him, Marie.

*Marie.*— Father, he means well!

*Forester.*— Well then, go with him.

*Sophie.*— Don't be so hard —

*Robert.*— By Good in heaven, Marie, who destined us for one another!

*Forester (in the same tone as before to SOPHIE).*— And don't you dare, do you hear me—if something were to happen! (*He takes her to the background.*)

*Andres (interrupting).*— Now that will do, Marie, either you leave, or he will go this instant!

*Sophie.*— Now, you be silent, Andres, don't you mix in. (*Goes to his left.*)

*Andres.*— I have been silent long enough. Leave me, mother! His father offended mine, and he shall not insult my sister now!

*Robert.*— You are mine, Marie! I should like to see him, who — Away with your hand!

*Marie.*— Robert, he is my brother.

*Andres (threatening).*— One more step, and —

*Robert.*— Away, I tell you, or —

*Andres.*— You are no match for me!

*Robert.*— You shall not touch with the tip of your finger what is mine. In spite of all of you —

*Andres.*— Do you hear that, father?

*Forester (stepping between the two).*— Back, I tell you, boys! Who is the master here?

*Andres.*— If it is you, father, then prove it, or let me show that fellow what —

*Forester.*— Andres, now stop, and do not stir!

*Andres.*— Father!

*Forester.*— I wonder, whether you will obey!

(*ANDRES, grasping a gun from the hook.*)

*Forester.*— What are you after now?

*Andres (sullen).*— Nothing. Here in the house you are the master; outside in the open, nobody is boss, there we are all our own masters!

*Forester.*— In my forest I am the master!

*Andres.*— But not one step further!

*Forester.*— What do you mean? Answer!

*Andres.*— Nothing, father. That fellow there need only understand. If you do not think of your honor — for Marie's I shall look out. That is meant for him who offends her!

*Sophie.*— What talk!

*Robert.*— Nothing but talk, indeed! You can frighten children by such words, but not men.

*Andres.*— It shall not stop with words, as true as I am a man!

*Robert.*— If you were one, you would not threaten, you —

*Andres.*— If we were in the woods, you would not mock me, you —

*Forester.*— Andres!

*Robert.*— Make room!

*Andres.*— Away, I tell you!

(FORESTER whistles between his fingers.)

*Andres.*— If you —

*Forester (stepping between the two).*— Crazy boys! Peace! Do not dare! If I need a guardian, I shall not have recourse to a mere slip of a boy. Am I the master here or is it you? What business have you to be here, boy? You ought to be in the woods at this hour of the day, supervising Weiler. Then take a dozen oak plants from the nursery, wrap them in damp moss; the man from Haslau will soon call for them and see that he need not wait. Do you hear me? Hurry up, now!

(ANDRES obeying, exit, throwing a threatening glance at ROBERT which the latter returns.)

*Forester.*— And as to you, Mr. Stein, good-bye, sir; you understand, what I mean by that?

*Sophie.*— If you would speak to your father gently and kindly, and if you could persuade him to come back to us!

*Marie.*— Then I would see how much you really love me, Robert!

*Forester (milder).*— Do not come back without him! Farewell, Robert, and leave the girl in peace.

*Robert.*— I am going. But whichever way things may turn, I do not give up my right on Marie. (*Exit.*)

*Sophie.*— Seems everything goes wrong to-day! And you, cousin, you, too, are going to leave us?

*Wilkins.*— Yes, well! If a man wants to run his with head against the wall, well, I am not the fool to hold my hand between the two. (*Exit.*)

## ACT II

(*In the Castle.*)

### SCENE I

(STEIN alone, sitting.)

*Stein.*— Cursed old fool! To spoil this beautiful day! We'd be at



lunch now! He is right as to the trees. But why must he provoke me? Although, to be sure, I ought to have been wiser. But my temper always runs away with me. — I am sorry for his wife and the children. I shall — (*Rising, sits down again.*) What? Commit another folly on top of the old one? Shall I yield on the impulse and make peace with him as quickly as I quarreled? Old fool! But let that be a lesson to me! — (*Short pause, rises again, picks up his hat and cane and drops them again.*) No, I say, this time he will have to begin making amends! I cannot help it! But, perhaps, he already — Is that Moller coming? (*Rushes to meet him.*)

## SCENE II

(ROBERT, STEIN.)

*Robert (entering quickly and excited).*— You are about to destroy my happiness, father!

*Stein (surprised, angry).*— Robert!

*Robert.*— You cannot, you dare not do such a thing!

*Stein.*— Well, that's all that's lacking! Now you begin to —

*Robert.*— Father, you have me called away from the celebration of my betrothal, like a child from his play; but I am no child, to whom you may give a thing and take it away at will. You gave me your word and you must keep it! Are you to sacrifice my happiness for a mere whim of yours? No father has a right to —

*Stein.*— Now, please, will you tell me what nonsense you are talking about?

*Robert.*— I want to ask you, whether you will reconcile with the forester?

*Stein.*— Boy, how dare you ask explanations from me? Go to that old mule, he is wrong, he must yield, not I.

*Robert.*— I am just coming from him; he sent me to you —

*Stein.*— I cannot change it, so leave me in peace.

*Robert.*— Then, you will do no steps to a reconciliation?

*Stein.*— No, none! If he does not give in. And now go and leave me.

*Robert.*— If you will do nothing, I shall never cross his threshold. Andres and I have become deadly enemies, as it is; may be we shall confront each other before long on life and death! Let it be then! I did all I could! Father, no reproach can be thrown on me. If an accident should happen — you could have prevented it, — and the forester could likewise! Marie is mine, and neither you nor the forester shall take her from me.

*Stein.*— Are you crazy, boy? Go to your room this instant! Do you hear?

*Robert.*— Father, I ask you —

*Stein.*— You have to obey and not to ask questions!

*Robert.*— Your temper gets the best of you again, father. I implore you, do not open the wound which has hardly healed. I shall wait till you have calmed, till you have had time to think it over!

*Stein.*— I am calm. You want me to lose my temper, but you shall not succeed! Now, don't say another word, do you hear, not a word!

*Robert (beside himself).*— Not a word? A hundred words, a thousand, I shall say as many as I please! I will speak, until I have said all I have to say! You can order Moller and your other slaves to be silent, but not me! Get in a temper as much as you like, leave this room or stay — I will talk. You shall know once for all that I will no longer bear to be treated like a boy. I will be free, I will show you that I can be independent, you shall respect me, I will show you that I am neither your tool, nor anybody else's for that matter!

*Stein.*— Do you threaten me with that old story? I know it by heart. You have not gone yet! Are you still here? I thought you had gone long ago. Oh, well, indeed! You wanted to talk. Well, then, talk away, I shall not stop you.

*Robert (quiet, but decided).*— And if you wished, it would be too late to stop me. I demand my right and if it cost my life or another's! But both you and the forester will be responsible for it.

*Stein (begins to repent).*— Boy, —

*Robert.*— Farewell — Perhaps forever! (*Rushes off.*)

### SCENE III

(*STEIN alone, then the PASTOR.*)

*Stein (forgetting himself, wants to follow him).*— Where are you going? Robert? Boy! — The dickens! I can't run after him! I wonder whether he will be back soon?

(*PASTOR enters.*)

*Stein.*— Is it you, Pastor? You are just —

*Pastor.*— I heard all. (*Shakes hands.*)

*Stein.*— Robert, my boy —

*Pastor.*— Almost knocked me over, just now. Is he again about to leave for a change? Is he? Well, we'll tie him down all right!

*Stein.*— And the stubborn old mule —

*Pastor.*— I know it all. It's the old story again and we all know the end of it in advance, as usual.

*Stein.*— This time not quite so certain!

*Pastor.*— Yes, it is true, this time the matter is more complicated than usual, because the young gentlemen mixed in. But —

*Stein.*— Is that not Robert coming back?

## SCENE IV

(MOLLER, *preceding ones.*)

*Stein.*— Oh! Is it you, Moller? How is it? Does he give in?

*Moller.*— He is so far from it that he sends word through me, telling you that you have not even the right to dismiss him.

*Stein.*— I, not the right to dismiss him? (*Calm.*) If he at least meant by it that I am not serious — And did you try all?

*Moller.*— All.

*Stein.*— Did you also threaten with Buchjager? Did you act as if you were to replace him? As if you were to go straight to him to give him his appointment, in case?

*Moller.*— As if I were? — My orders were more definite than that. Buchjager thanks you very much and he accepts the position.

*Stein.*— He accepts it — Indeed, he does, does he? What a delightfully obliging man Buchjager is! And you, too, with your hurry and rush! Are you possessed, sir? It was all meant to frighten Ulrich. He was to come to his senses and give in. And, granted, while in a temper, I had put things the way you now are pleased to interpret them, then it was your duty to understand me differently. You know as well as I do that in my heart I did not even dream of dismissing the old man, who is worth a thousand — but you understood me well enough — I am sure you did! But, now I recollect, only too late, you were against that marriage from the outset.

*Moller.*— I have been in the service of Stein & Son these twenty years, time enough to learn that you may be too conscientious in your endeavors. I executed your orders only literally, and if you want to misjudge me, I have one comfort left; I upheld the dignity of Stein & Son. (*Sits down to his work.*)

*Stein.*— Well, then let the dignity of Stein & Son thank you for it, for I shall not do so! (*Pause.*) But, to be sure, upon second thought, what else could be done, after what had happened? Well, excuse me, if I went too far just now, but — I put him to the test in front of Wilkens. It is

true, I cannot — d— my rashness! And I did not even mean it! And now it is to become true, simply because I said too much when in a temper!

*Pastor.*— Yes, indeed, it is pretty hard to pay for the blunders our temper caused. Why in the world did you not quarrel as usual under four eyes?

*Stein (walking up and down).*— No, it will never do — And yet, if I think of these hot-headed boys! — Moller, have Robert sent for, he shall come right away, I must talk to him. (*MOLLER goes out, but comes back immediately.*) I cannot help him, I really cannot; this time he must make the first step. I cannot go back on my word, he ought to know that. And by now he must have come to his senses! — But that he may see that I am ready for him and that I am willing to meet him half way — I — how would it be, Pastor, if you were to go to him? The position, it is true, he must give up just for a short time, but as to his salary — well, I shall continue paying him the double amount; he may consider it, for the present, just as a kind of pension. I should think — well, after all, he is to blame most in the whole matter — and he pays cheap enough for it all!

*Pastor.*— I am going right now to him.

*Stein.*— And I shall accompany you a short distance, at least, I have someone with whom to take my constitutional. (*Both off to left.*)

## SCENE V

(*MOLLER alone, then BUCHJAGER.*)

*Moller.*— And even if the wedding with Lohlein should not come about, Stein & Son has, at least, for once, had his way. It made me sick to see him each time the first to —. But this time I am satisfied with my old man and most willing to endorse his displeasure. — But what's all that noise out there, I wonder? (*On the threshold.*) How well that they left just a few minutes ago! It is Buchjager, and in what a condition. He is a beast, no man! (*Leads in BUCHJAGER who is completely intoxicated.*)

*Buchjager (still behind the scene).*— Where is Stein? Halloo, old fellow! Stein! Is it you, Moller?

*Moller (condescendingly).*— Nobody can have the least doubt that it is you! What do you want here?

*Buchjager (while MOLLER helps him to a chair).*— I want to thank him. Common politeness requires to th — thank him. Let somebody call Stein. To thank — is the fashion — just now.

*Moller.*— In this condition?

*Buchjager* (while MOLLER retains him by force).— Condition? What is that to you? It is condition enough that I want to thank him. Leave me alone with my condition. Is he in there? What?

*Moller*.— Nobody is in there, and you, you may thank your stars that it is so. You cannot be helped. No matter how much your friends want to help you, you are the undoing of your friends. Mr. Stein regrets already that he gave you the place, and here you give him the best excuse to —

*Buchjager*.— Stupid old ass, you! You and your favors. As if I did not know that you are bound to have Stein and Ulrich quarrel on account of Lohlein's daughter! Do you think I am quite such a fool to imagine that I shall be forester for more than a day? For I know well enough that those two idiots will not hold out for two days without making it up the next and then good-bye to my forestership, anyhow. You think, because the thirst does not plague you that you are genteel and respectable! I know I shall be forester for one d-d-day and that one day I m-m-mean to make u-u-u-use of, b-b-brother, let u-u-us be happy! You d— idiot you! (*Embraces him.*)

*Moller* (ashamed and very awkward, warding him off).— But — but if anyone were to see us! Are you not ashamed? (*Recovering his dignity.*) What did you do to Ulrich's boy? What? —

*Buchjager*.— Did? did? did? On account of yesterday, don't you know? On account of my spite a-a-against the old fool, his father, do you know? The old man will chew off his white cat's beard in his wrath, I tell you, when he hears —

*Moller*.— But what did you do to Andres?

*Buchjager*.— What I did? Nothing! You will learn it soon enough, I guess. What? Thirsty, thirsty! I am always thirsty, that is my one cry! That is my misery, my sickness, my — my curse! It will kill me in my early youth. Where is Stein?

*Moller*.— You come with me now, to my room, do you hear me? I'll give you some black coffee and, may be, that will sober you up. Then I must go to the foundry. I shall take you along up to the mill and then you go home at once.

*Buchjager* (while led away by MOLLER).— Where is he? Halloo! Where is the old fool, Stein? Halloo!

## SCENE VI

(*Lodge. SOPHIE alone, then WEILER, later on FORESTER.*)

*Sophie*. (*closing window*).— Robert not back yet. And the pastor either.

*Weiler (coming through door, center).*— Well, well, I declare! But who is who now? I should like to know! I wonder whether Mrs. Ulrich has kept something for me? But I don't care, I have no appetite, anyhow. Well!

*Sophie.*— I guess it will be cold by now. (*Takes a dish from the oven, bread from the closet, puts it on table at left.*)

*Weiler.*— We'll all be cold some day. (*Sits down to eat.*)

*Forester (coming from the side).*— Did you scent out the stag again from Lutzdorf?

*Weiler.*— I'll strut you! But that's the way. As soon as husband and wife, master and servant — and there's an end to love and friendship!

*Forester.*— What do you mean by I'll strut you?

*Weiler.*— There he stood with his four legs in the oat field and ate his full share of it.

*Forester.*— Who?

*Weiler.*— The stag from Lutzdorf.

*Sophie (busy carrying the meal for WEILER).*— What's the matter?

*Weiler.*— Hm!

*Sophie.*— Well, I wonder whether you'll open your mouth? When we don't want to hear your gossip, you can talk well enough.

*Forester.*— Well! Do you hear?

*Weiler.*— Well! — Buchjager! — Yes, indeed! He has grown six inches to-day. Has put on the regulation uniform, right away, took his hanger all right, and drank two glasses of whisky and six cock-tails above his usual allowance, but now he needs a path at least twice the size in width he usually needs and that's saying much!

*Forester.*— Are you through?

*Weiler.*— Almost. But who is the forester of Dusterwalde now? If I may ask? He gave his orders to the wood-cutters to hew down the trees, so I guess, it must be he! But you act as if you were still at it.

*Forester.*— So am I. I am the forester of Dusterwalde and no one else.

*Weiler.*— Then you'll fight it out? But I'll tell you who is in the right nowadays. (*Gestures of counting money.*) Whoever has the dough. — Who comes rushing along like that?

## SCENE VII

(*WILKENS hurrying in. WEILER eating; FORESTER, SOPHIE.*)

*Wilkins (entering).*— But what in the world has been going on here? Good day!

*Sophie* (frightened).— Going on? For Heaven's sake — did anything happen?

*Forester*.— What's all this excitement about?

*Wilkins*.— Well, now you'll see what your stubbornness will do for you.

*Sophie*.— But what in the world —?

*Wilkins*.— What do I know? I met that crazy fellow, Weiler, at the Scheivenweg just a while ago, gesticulating wildly with both his hands, as if he were beating some one like mad and pointing to the lodge —

*Forester*.— He pointed to the woods; most likely he meant the trees which —

*Wilkins*.— To tell the truth, I did not intend to come up here, but then I thought I had better see you. And to be sure, there was somebody standing not far from your house in deep thought. It was Andres. Well, I up to him and wanted to ask him what was wrong with him. Hm! Hm! The minute he got hold of me, he looks at me as if he were ready to swallow me alive, and — off he is! I call after him, well, seems he has forgotten his name. So, me again after the young gentleman, but! off he is, as if his conscience pricked him somewhere.

*Sophie*.— I wonder what that means?

*Forester* (calling from the window with authority).— Andres!

*Weiler*.— Here he comes!

## SCENE VIII

(PASTOR, preceding ones. WEILER still at table, eating.)

*Weiler*.— No, it's the Pastor! (Greetings.)

*Sophie*.— Heaven be thanked! Our good Pastor!

*Forester*.— You think, you are coming to a feast, Pastor, but —

*Pastor*.— I know all, all you did!

*Forester*.— Mr. Stein —

*Pastor*.— I am just coming from him and what I have to tell you — well! I know you'll not take it amiss, because it is I who have to break it to you.

*Sophie*.— If you are coming from Mr. Stein, then perhaps all may turn out well, after all. But you don't know, sir, how stubborn that husband of mine is.

*Pastor*.— Well, what about it? Don't I know him? But he is not the chief mischief-maker, or I should not be here as Stein's messenger. He is willing to meet you half ways.

*Wilkins*.— That's more than I would do, if I were the master.

*Pastor.*—Indeed, old friend, Stein is sorry that his temper spoiled the beautiful day.

*Forester.*—Do you hear it, cousin Wilkens?

*Pastor.*—As to your dismissal, well, that was not meant seriously.

*Forester.*—Do you hear that, Weiler?

*Pastor.*—But, of course, now it cannot be changed and must —

*Forester.*—Cannot be changed? — Pastor, what do you mean?

*Pastor.*—That he cannot go back on his word right away, without making a fool of himself. He said, you must see that yourself.

*Forester (stretching his words).*—Is that so? — And — Buchjager?

*Pastor (shrugging his shoulders).*—Is, for the present, forester of Dusterwalde; that cannot be altered just now —

*Forester.*—And you dare tell me that! You! But I tell you, Pastor, Buchjager cannot be forester of Dusterwalde. I am the forester and I shall remain it, sir Pastor, until Mr. Stein can prove that I neglected my duty.

*Pastor.*—But that you may see how ready he is to atone for his share of wrong in the matter, and in order to restore the old friendly relations between you two, you are to have your salary doubled as a pension.

(FORESTER makes a few steps and whistles.)

*Pastor.*—Well, that is my message, old friend, and now —

*Forester (stands straight before the pastor).*—Pension for what, sir? Does he think to buy my honor with that money? Sir Pastor, I do not sell my honor. (Few steps, whistles again.)

*Pastor.*—But you queer old fellow —

*Wilkens.*—Indeed, if he would only listen to what people tell him!

*Forester (as above).*—Is it to be charity? I need no charity. I can work. I do not need to take money without rendering services. I do not accept alms. I know he cannot dismiss me, if I am guilty of no neglect. I know that from several instances; for instance, from the case of forester Rupert from Erdmannsgrun. If I were to allow myself to be desposed from my office, then I would confess that I was a bad forester. They could not prove anything to Rupert either, and so he kept his place. And, moreover, who would take a dismissed forester in his services? Pastor, I inherited my honor from my father and grandfather and I owe it to my children to hand it down to them intact. They call my position hereditary all over the valley; I would be the first of my race who would be dismissed. Go through my forest, sir, and if your heart does not laugh at the sight of — Sir, I extended the woods up to the cemetery; there my father and my grandfather are resting, and upon their grave stones are engraved the testimonials from their masters: ‘They were honest men



and loyal servants.' They are resting, as is due to hunters, beneath ever green pines. Sir, and if one of my grand-children should pass by and should ask: 'But why is he not lying here beneath the very firs he planted? Why is this no longer our home? Was he a scamp that his master could depose him?' And what if they were to look for my grave and should find it outside the walls of the cemetery? Pastor, if you can live without your honor, well and good — or rather, bad and worse for you. But, see here, Pastor, there is but one thing left for me, either to rest side by side with my father and grandfather beneath those pines, or — well, outside the walls. Sir pastor, I am the forester here, or Mr. Stein will have to declare in public that he acted like a rascal toward me. I put my own money into his woods; all I shall take with me will be a cane with which I shall go out into the wide world to look for a new service in my old age, but he will have to take from me the disgrace and the dishonor, and they will have to stick to him. I am in my good right and I shall maintain it.

*Wilkins.*— In your good right? Hm! Of what use is that good right to you? Justice costs money nowadays! Justice is but a toy for the rich like horses and carriages! Hm! You with your right and wrong! Your right is your stubbornness; you will take from your wife and children their food out of their very mouths only to keep your stubbornness agoing!

## SCENE IX

(WILHELM, *preceding ones.*)

*Wilhelm.*— Father, Andres is outside and will not come in. I told him you called for him.

*Sophie.*— Come, Wilhelm, we shall go to him.

*Forester.*— Stop, Sophie! All that is lacking, is that you will upset him completely with your lamentations. You will either keep quiet, or out you'll go by that door there and I shall take the key with me. (*Goes to back door, calls solemnly.*) Andres, come in immediately. Do you hear me?

## SCENE X

(ANDRES, *preceding ones.*)

(ANDRES *on the threshold, when he sees all those present, he wants to withdraw.*)

*Forester.*— Andres, come in, to your superior. (*Sits down as if for a trial.*)

(FORESTER, SOPHIE, WEILER and WILHELM to the left; PASTOR, WILKENS to right. ANDRES who dares look at no one, in center.)

*Forester.*— Here, this way, apprentice Andres Ulrich. From where do you come?

*Andres.*— From the copse, father.

*Forester.*— Where is your gun, Andres Ulrich?

(ANDRES is silent.)

*Forester.*— Who took it?

*Andres (dull).*— Buchjager.

(FORESTER rises involuntarily.)

*Sophie (in fear).*— Ulrich!

*Forester (sits down again).*— No one is allowed to talk here except the apprentice Ulrich and his superior, Andres —

*Andres.*— Father —

*Forester.*— Why don't you look straight at me?

*Andres.*— Because I cannot look in anybody's face anymore. I'll go to America as a cabin boy. Leave me, father!

*Forester.*— Boy, answer, if you are asked by your superior. What about Buchjager? Out with it, I tell you!

*Andres.*— I was just out in the nursery to take the oak plants as —

*Forester.*— As I had ordered you to do.

*Andres.*— When Buchjager came —

*Forester.*— Buchjager? Go on, Andres Ulrich.

*Andres.*— With six wood-cutters from the direction of Brandsberg —

*Forester.*— Go on, Andres Ulrich.

*Andres.*— He was drunk —

*Weiler (below his breath).*— As usual — (*Upon a glance from the FORESTER he acts as if he had said nothing.*)

*Andres.*— And the cutters were so too. He had the flask passed around. 'Begin here,' he said, 'Ulrich has devastated nicely,' says he, 'that's why the master dismissed him.' As he said that, I stepped forth —

*Forester.*— You stepped forth — (*Rising.*)

*Andres.*— And I told him that he was a miserable backbiter. And, moreover, could give no orders around here in this forest.

*Forester (stretching).*— In this forest!

*Andres.*— And he should go where he belonged.

*Forester (impressively).*— Belonged! (*Sits down.*) And he —

*Andres.*— Laughed —

*Forester (rising, sits down again, whistles, drums with his fingers on table).—* Go on —

*Andres.*— And said, 'What does that scamp want here?'

*Forester (raising his voice).—* Andres!

*Andres.*— Father!

*Forester.*— And you? Go on, hurry up!

*Andres.*— 'He has plants from these woods in his hands!' (*In a low voice.*) 'Stop the thief, the poacher!'

*Forester (short pause).—* And? —

*Andres.*— They held me.

*Forester.*— And you —

*Andres.*— They were too many — I could not fight them all off — it was of no avail.

*Forester (struggling to be calm).—* Was of no avail. They were six to one.

*Andres.*— I fought like fury, as soon as I saw, what they were at. They took off my cloth — I told them to shoot me, or I shall shoot him, if I were ever to come out alive. But he only laughed. They had to hold me —

*Forester (jumping up).—* And he —

*Andres (resistingly, imploringly).—* Father —

*Forester.*— And he did —

*Andres.*— Yes!

*Forester (weakly).—* Yes!

*Andres (beside himself).—* Father, I cannot go on. No one in the wide world ever dared do that to me!

*Forester (breathing heavily).—* Silence! Tell me later, then Andres — (*Pause, passing ANDRES, who goes over to where his mother stands.*) Fine weather to-day, Sir pastor. Funny, how the rheumatism got hold of my arm again! And the mosquitoes are playing in — I guess there'll be a heavy storm to-day. — Andres, he had you — I never dared touch you myself and a stranger should — a — don't say anymore about it, Andres — I understand you (*a few steps*).

*Sophie (to ANDRES).—* What in the world made you quarrel with Buchjager yesterday?

*Weiler.*— Did I not tell you so?

*Sophie.*— You are deathly pale, I'll get you some —

*Forester (stands before ANDRES; SOPHIE retires anxiously from him).—* Listen, Andres, and you too, Weiler. (*WEILER steps forth.*) Listen well. Whoever is found in my woods with a gun — is to be challenged! Do you hear?

*Weiler.*— Hm!

*Forester.*—That is my order for the day. Challenged! I am the forester, none else, and you are my subalterns. The master and his son are allowed to pass. But whosoever else enters the woods with a gun, do you hear? Whoever it may be—whether he wears a forester's uniform or not—is a poacher and will be dealt with accordingly. He will be challenged: 'Stop! Down with the gun!' Exactly as the regulations tell you. If he throws it down, all right and good, if not, aim and shoot—according to law.—And you, Wilhelm, go right away to Lawyer Schirmer in town. Tell him all. He shall lodge a complaint at court against Stein and his Buchjager. Do not forget to tell him all, Wilhelm; also that my father and grandfather held the position before me, that they call my office hereditary and cite the decision in the case of Rupert from Erdmannsgrun. It may not be necessary but it is safer to do so. Also, do not forget to tell that the forest lies open to the north; that Stein wants to depose me, because I do not want to act a scamp toward him. If you go right now, you can be back before night. Andres and I shall accompany you up to the Border Inn and Andres will wait for you there on your way home. (*To ANDRES, who picks out a gun.*) Take the double-barrelled one with the yellow strap, Andres, I'll take the other one.

*Andres (does so).*—Mother, a neckerchief, I am very cold.

*Sophie (getting one from the closet).*—You ought to stay home, Andres, after all that excitement. (*Helps him tying the kerchief around his neck.*)

*Wilkens.*—And he does not see that he'll be wrong! He is positively blind.

*Forester (who in the meantime has fastened his hanger).*—I am not! Am I not? Then he has a right to dismiss me?

*Pastor.*—Of course, it is not right, wrong before his heart, but right before the law.

*Forester.*—What is right before one's heart is also right before the law.

*Pastor.*—If you would only let it be explained to you—

*Forester.*—Explained? Everything is as clear as daylight, except your phantoms, by means of which, you gentlemen, like to frighten us that we doubt our own common-sense. You with your 'If' and 'When.' I know that they do not come from the heart but only from your reason! Well, then, Pastor, go on and explain! But with 'Yea' and 'Nay,' what is above these is of evil. 'If' and 'When' are of evil. Mr Stein wishes to take my honor from me; he wants to pay me for my loyalty by heaping disgrace upon me and mine. In my sixty-fifth year I am to be made a rascal. Well, Sir Pastor, explain that with 'Yea' and 'Nay,' is it right?

*Pastor.*—With 'Yea' and 'Nay'?—To be sure, it is not right in the ordinary sense of the word, but—

*Forester (interrupting triumphantly).*—Then it is not right? And if it is not right, it must be wrong. What are the courts here for? They are to see that no wrong is done anyone. Nobody shall make me doubt justice, and whoever shall speak to me of giving in, is my enemy. Amen. If only a 'But' were needed to make right wrong, I should rather live among the savages. I'd rather be the most miserable animal in God's wide world than a human being. Are you ready, boys?

*Andres and Wilhelm.*—Yes.

*Forester.*—Then come on! Let all else go to the dickens, sir! but right, sir, right must and will remain right!

*(While he and the others go off, curtain drops.)*

### ACT III

*(Border Inn.)*

#### SCENE I

*(LINDENSCHMIED, INNKEEPER, MOLLER entering; after him FREI.)*

*Moller.*—Innkeeper, a glass of beer. *(To himself.)* Buchjager will now find his way home, I hope. It is but fifteen minutes from the mill to his home. — Good evening!

*Frei (still behind the scene).*—Just a glass while passing. *(Enters.)* They have fine times across the border in the Duchy, I can tell you.

*Host.*—May God preserve us from such fine times!

*Moller.*—Nice company that.

*Host.*—Will you not sit down, Sir Bookkeeper?

*Moller.*—Thank you, I am on my way to the foundry; the men have already started. *(To himself, while putting glass to his lips.)* Here is to the marriage of Lohlein & Co.

*Frei.*—Yonder everything goes topsy-turvey; here with us they'll start at any time. The Forest Warden has already barricaded himself in his lodge.

*Host.*—Nonsense. He! He is conscience personified!

*Frei.*—People are conscientious as long as it pays. He is a scamp who is so a minute longer than necessary. They say he and his men are after Buchjager, they'll shoot him if they find him. *(Gestures.)* And the forester is not the man who talks much. I know the old devil with his white beard.

*Lindenschmied (laughing hoarsely).*—Hm!

*Frei (looking around at him).*—Do you, perhaps take Buchjager's part? Is that so, Lindenschmied?

*Lindenschmied (as before).*— Buchjager's? —

*Frei.*— We all know how you love him!

*Lindenschmied (gestures as before).*— Hm!

*Frei.*— Weiler has heard the forester say it. And, I tell you, what the forester says is as good as done.

*Lindenschmied.*— He'll think it over, the — forester. — (*Dull.*) If it were not for these fellows in the courts. And if it were not for him. (*Gestures indicating the hang-man.*)

*Frei.*— He is no more. He — The word now is: 'Freedom and Liberty.' (*Beats upon table.*) Long life to the forester! And whosoever has any intentions against him, — I point to no one —

*Moller (hastily).*— Here, Sir Host. Almost eight o'clock.

*Host.*— Why in such a hurry, Sir Bookkeeper?

*Moller.*— They are waiting for me at the foundry.

*Host.*— Your change makes —

*Moller (already at the door).*— Never mind! You can credit it to me. (*Off.*)

## SCENE II

(*Preceding ones without MOLLER.*)

*Frei (rising, making a fist after him).*— No credit to you and the likes of you! All will be paid now. Lindenschmied, are you coming along across the border?

*Lindenschmied.*— Have my own way to go. (*Advancing.*) They in the courts — Ten years from now a policeman will be a thing that none will even recollect. No, we have freedom and liberty, and order has ceased to exist. Every one can do as he likes, no policemen, no court, no jails, no iron chains, I tell you. If God had created the game for the noblemen only, he would have burned their coat-of-arms upon their skins. Would have been an easy thing to do for a man like God. Men now know that the people in prisons are martyrs who ought to be looked up to, and the rich and nobles are thieves, however honest they may be. And the thrifty and industrious ones are thieves too, for they are the cause that the good people who don't want to work, are poor. That's what all the pamphlets tell you about now. And if the forester takes hold of Buchjager (*gestures,*) no one can do or say anything to him for that; for Buchjager has had many an honest man who stole convicted for it.

*Lindenschmied.*— And no punishment? None! Did you say? And if someone else than Ulrich were to do the job, he would not be punished either for it?

*Frei.*— No, I tell you! Across the border the honest people burnt down the Duke's castle and plundered it. Several people perished, but who cares? Whoever has a debt to pay, well, now's the time to get square. Ulrich does not need to go far either, Buchjager is staggering around somewhere in the ravine near the mill, he lost his hat —

*Lindenschmied* (*putting his hands into his pockets with a convulsive motion*).— And nothing — absolutely nothing — not even a blunt knife with me!

## SCENE III

(*ANDRES, preceding ones.*)

*Andres* (*coming in*).— How hot it is here! (*Takes off his neckerchief.*) Good evening! (*Ties his kerchief round the gun and puts the latter by his side.*) Be careful, the gun is loaded! (*To Host.*) I don't know what's the matter with me, but I don't feel quite myself. I was to wait for my brother at the border.

*Host.*— Make yourself at home, sir.

*Andres.*— I guess I may as well. It is too early for Wilhelm, anyhow. (*Throws himself upon a bench, puts his arms upon the table and hides his head.*)

*Frei* (*beating table with his glass*).— Another glass, Host. And I do you a great favor by drinking here where I have still to pay for it. A week from now, you'll have to work and no honest fellow need pay you a penny for your trouble, I tell you.

*Lindenschmied* (*looking continually now at ANDRES, now at the gun*).— If he were to fall asleep — that fellow! (*Leaning across table to FREI.*) Around here in the ravine, did you say? — And, Frei, are you sure that all punishment is done away with?

*Frei.*— Prejudices, I tell you! If you commit a crime and they hang you for it, you may call me a scamp for the rest of your natural life! Don't you see! What used to be called honesty and loyalty was old women's talk. And a fellow who keeps his word is now considered a rascal, and such a one I would not trust out of my sight. The people in themselves are honest, because they are the people. You ought to hear the gentlemen talk, a university professor was among them and he must know it all.

*Lindenschmied* (*leading him away*).— But what about our conscience and the life hereafter?

*Frei.*— Prejudices! Nothing but prejudices, I tell you!

*Lindenschmied.*— That's exactly what I always thought, but we did not dare express it formerly.

*Frei.*— They told the people tales about heaven and hell, so that my lord could keep and preserve his rabbits for himself alone. They trained the poor people to have a conscience, so that they'd allow the rich to live in all their glory and lord it over them.

*Lindenschmied.*— And is he around here in the ravine?

(*Host becoming interested.*)

*Frei.*— Who?

*Lindenschmied.*— He — the — (*buttoning his coat.*)

*Frei.*— Where are you bound for?

*Lindenschmied.*— To pay off old debts before the world gets new. (*Watching ANDRES secretly, he fumbles with his left hand in pocket of vest to pay host.*) Can't get it out with my —

*Frei.*— The fingers of your left hand are stiff from —

*Lindenschmied (gestures).*— And those of my right hand will soon be crooked!

*Frei.*— Have you rheumatism?

*Lindenschmied (laughs hoarsely).*— Yes, a leaden one! Two ounces of lead and three small shot. (*Talks in a low voice so as not awaken ANDRES.*) A little souvenir from the fellow in the ravine.

*Frei.*— From Buchjager?

*Lindenschmied.*— Because I made a few dollars with the game of the Master of Strahlau. There was enough uncoined money running wild in the woods.

*Frei.*— Another glass, Sir Host! (*Handing him glass.*)

*Lindenschmied (lost in thoughts, alone in the foreground).*— I ran out six times — I was told he was to pass by there — but he never came! In those times it was still in fashion to have a conscience. So I thought: 'It is not to be now' — and I postponed it, thinking, I'd meet him sometime by chance — a sign that it was to be then. The very thought I should not get even with him became a regular nightmare and now — ha! ha! ha! (*Laughs hysterically and short, awakens from his thoughts and looks around.*)

*Frei.*— Did you laugh, Lindenschmied?

*Lindenschmied.*— Don't know!

*Frei.*— Well, you have a funny way of laughing. Are you going with me across the border into the Duchy?

*Lindenschmied (slapping shoulder of FREI).*— Old fellow, now for Freedom and Liberty! Have my own affairs to attend to.

*Frei.*— For my part you may do as you like. (*Stepping into the background to innkeeper.*) How much do I owe you for the last time in my life. Here, can you change?

*Host.*— Here are three, four —



(LINDENSCHMIED uses this moment when nobody notices him and steals ANDRES' gun and hurries off with it.)

*Frei.*— What time is it, Host?

*Host.*— Past eight.

*Frei (going off).*— Good-bye!

## SCENE IV

(HOST, ANDRES.)

*Andres (awakens with a start).*— Eight? — Now it is about time for Wilhelm.

*Host (approaching ANDRES, a little afraid).*— You are an honest fellow. I can speak to you about my misgivings. That is a fearful gang, those fellows. I overheard a conversation, I tell you. Buchjager is drunk down in the ravine and Lindenschmied, his deadly enemy is after him. While he talked, he spoke of crooked fingers! And the man is not afraid of anything.

*Andres.*— You think Lindenschmied has intentions upon Buchjager's life?

*Host.*— Mind, it was not I, who told you! They'd burn down my house. And if I were to look on — (*goes up and down*).

*Andres (was about to rise, but sits down again).*— For him? — Let happen to him what God will allow! I shall not stir to help that scamp!

*Host (as before).*— What shall I do?

*Andres.*— Father says: 'If a man is in need, any decent and honest man must render help and only afterwards we shall ask, "whom did we help?"'

*Host.*— I wonder, if I ought not give the alarm to the police? But —

*Andres (rising, decided).*— I'll go. I'll try to find Buchjager. Nothing will happen to Wilhelm in the meanwhile, I guess. He has not far to go home. What am I looking for? Oh, yes, my neckerchief. My head feels like fire! Where did I leave it? I tied it around my gun. (*As he does not find the latter.*) But where is my gun?

*Host.*— Did you lose your gun?

*Andres.*— I had it here, the one with the yellow strap.

*Host.*— I saw it standing here a moment ago.

*Andres.*— Perhaps you took it to prevent an accident?

*Host.*— I? I did not touch it, Lord Almighty! If Lindenschmied? — You were asleep and I was just counting the change — what is to be done?

*Andres.*— Nothing. I shall go without it. There is no time to get another one from home.

*Host.*— But unarmed —

*Andres.*— Never mind! If I'll only not get worse here in my chest.

(*On threshold.*) If I'll only not be too late! (*Outside.*) Good-bye, Sir Host!

(*Both go off.*)

(*Change of Scenery*)

IN THE RAVINE

(*Picturesque wild forest ravine; in background across stage a wild brook, opposite it rocks, upon which runs a steep narrow path side by side with the brook. Twilight.*)

SCENE V

*Katherine.*— How gruesome it is here! We are pretty far away from the castle now. Where are we, Master Robert?

*Robert.*— In the ravine, Katherine.

*Katherine.*— In the ravine? Where it is so unsafe? Where are all the poachers and smugglers from across the border — (*Looks around in fear.*)

*Robert.*— Don't get frightened, little one; we have a good companion with us (*pointing to his gun*). Do you see anything down there?

*Katherine.*— Something shimmering, like a white wall and dark shutters

*Robert.*— That is the Lodge.

*Katherine.*— Truly? Yes, so it is! Thank the Lord! Now I can see the antlers up against the roof to the west.

*Robert.*— Here is the letter. But you must not carry it so openly in your hands. Have you an excuse ready, if the old man should happen to meet you?

*Katherine* (*shamefacedly and smiling self-consciously*).— Oh, Master Robert, do you imagine any girl as dumb as that? Don't you worry about that and leave it to me. Miss Marie is teaching sewing and embroidery to my little sisters — and, moreover —

*Robert* (*folding letter, which he read over again*).— Well, then, Katherine! But deliver it only into Marie's hands, or her mother's, to none else, not even to Andres or Wilhelm. Do you hear? Only into her own hands or into those of her mother!

*Katherine.*— But I am to go all that long way alone?

*Robert.*— It is but two gun shots from here. I must not be seen near the Lodge. When you go home take that path there, only if you do not get rid of the letter come back here.

*Katherine.*— But don't you go away!

*Robert.*— No, Katherine, I shall stay here.

(*KATHERINE off.*)

## SCENE VI

(*ROBERT alone, then BUCHJAGER, finally MOLLER with two workmen.*)

*Robert (looking after Katherine, then walks up and down).*— I wonder whether she'll come! Will she leave her father for me? (*Stops.*) I'll go out into the world as a forester. I am young and strong and know forestry thoroughly. Why should I not succeed? (*Lost in thought.*) And then, as I come home from the woods, thoroughly tired from the day's work in the open air — she will be looking for me, come to meet me — take my gun and put it over her shoulder in order to help carry something — And my lodge will stand there, as this one does here — and the leaves on the trees will rustle — and I shall embrace her and call out in my happiness: 'Only that happiness is true which we owe to ourselves!' — And then —

(*A shot is fired and arouses him.*)

*Buchjager (still behind stage, groaning).*— Rascal!

*Robert.*— What was that!

*Buchjager (stumbling in; ROBERT hastens to him and supports the dying man).* — I — am — gone —

*Robert.*— Gottfried! For Heaven's sake! Has any one shot you? Halloo there! Any one near? Halloo, help!

*Moller (behind stage).*— Quick, people, over across the bridge! The call comes from there!

*Robert.*— Some men are coming. Here! Here! Help!

*Moller (as before).*— It is Master Robert's voice.

*Robert.*— If anything can be done, it must be done quickly. (*Opens coat and waistcoat of the dying man.*)

*Moller.*— Oh, is it you, Mister Stein? (*Comes in with two workmen.*)  
But —

*Robert.* — Moller, is it you? Look what happened! — Are you still alive, Gottfried?

*Buchjager.*— As yet — but —

*Moller (stepping up to him).*— Buchjager! Almighty God!

*Robert.*— Killed treacherously! The bullet went through his back.

*Moller (stepping to him).*— Gottfried, speak; who did it?

*Buchjager.*— He had the gun — with — the yellow strap —

*Robert.*— Andres' gun?

*Buchjager.*— He had threatened me —

*Robert.*— Impossible!

*Moller.*— Was it Andres, Gottfried?

*Buchjager.*— Andres — Yes — I —

*Moller.*— He is dying. (*Pause.*) Lift him! And you, Mr. Stein — That's a regular den of assassins around here, I tell you! Come! Come away from here! There are more around here in hiding; only now I met Weiler with a gun — the villain. He was playing the spy, that's clear now. Come, I tell you! But for Heaven's sake, why do you hesitate! —

*Robert.*— Go, if you wish.

*Moller.*— But what do you want here? And your father — if I were to leave you alone in this danger — if I were not to take you with me. How is he to believe that I tried to persuade you?

*Robert.*— You have witnesses enough here. I tell you once for all — I shall stay here. (*Walks up and down in violent emotion.*)

*Moller.*— Well then, come on, you; you all heard it. (*While going off.*) Lord, I wonder how it will end!

(*The workmen lift the body; MOLLER off with them.*)

## SCENE VII

(*ROBERT alone; later ANDRES, finally LINDENSCHMIED.*)

*Robert.*— Shameful! Horrid — And to think that Andres should be capable of taking such a revenge! And I am to believe that — Am I? The dying man said so; he had threatened him — it was his gun — and it is all true — Buchjager died here — here is his blood on the grass, so that I cannot doubt it. And such people stand between me and my happiness! Remain firm, Robert! Dare the utmost! You have to deal with men who shrink from no crime — Who is coming? — It is he himself — Andres — (*Going to meet ANDRES who is not visible yet.*) Well, come on! If you look for me, murderer, you'll not find me weaponless and unarmed like Buchjager —

*Andres (coming in, pale and staggering).*— Buchjager? —

*Robert.*— They are carrying him away down there. He was murdered and you did it.

*Andres (raging).*— I, Robert?

*Robert.*— The murdered man recognized you and your gun — and your conscience betrays you.

*Andres.*— Listen — for God's sake —

(*LINDENSCHMIED creeps across the path between the rocks in the background.*)

*Robert.*—Flee, murderer. Each step brings you nearer the gallows. There is blood here that cries to Heaven and you have the mark of Cain on your face; the fever that is shaking you, accuses you.

*Andres.*—The fever upon you, d— liar! Lindenschmied was after Buchjager, he stole my gun from me. I hurried after him as soon as I learned of it. I fainted—raised myself with all the strength left in me and—

*Robert.*—Lindenschmied had—

*Andres.*—If you don't believe me, look down there to the rocks—

*Robert.*—Murderer, stop! Or I'll shoot you down.

(LINDENSCHMIED hurries over the rocky path across the stage. ROBERT follows below.)

*Andres (staggering after him).*—Look out, Robert! The man is desperate—it is a matter of life and death!

*Lindenschmied (behind the scene).*—Stop or I'll shoot!

*Robert (same).*—Down with your gun. Stop!

*Andres.*—He is aiming—jump aside, Robert! (Two shots are fired quickly one after another). It is done! (Disappearing among bushes.)

(Change of Scenery)

CASTLE

SCENE VIII

(STEIN, restless; then BASTIAN; later PASTOR.)

*Stein.*—I wonder whether Moller forgot to send for Robert. Or, perhaps, the boy—that quarrel with Andres.—Bastian!

(BASTIAN on threshold.)

*Stein.*—Where is Mr. Moller?

*Bastian.*—He went to the foundry.

*Stein.*—Was Mr. Robert not at home since dinner time?

*Bastian.*—Master Robert dressed for traveling and then went away with Katherine.

(STEIN motions to BASTIAN; BASTIAN off.)

*Stein.*—And the Pastor—could be back by now for quite some time—

*Bastian (on threshold).*—The Pastor—

*Stein.*—The very man I want!

(PASTOR enters.)

*Stein (shaking hands with him).*— At last! At last! Do you bring good news?

*Pastor (shrugging shoulders).*— There could be better.

*Stein.*— Did you meet Hot Spur Robert?

*Pastor.*— No.

*Stein.*— I was in hopes you'd bring him with you — you stayed away so long.

*Pastor.*— A sick man, to whom I was called on my way here, detained me till now.

*Stein.*— Well, then, you are coming from a sick to a sicker one. If impatience, dissatisfaction with oneself, and evil forebodings were diseases, I should be a dangerously sick patient. — But to the answer — I did not allow you any time. (*Indicates by motion to be seated; sits down, rises again immediately.*) If I could only sit down and rest. Six times I found myself with my hat in my hands; the old habit of living so closely together almost drives me to the forester. It is worse than rheumatism. Meanwhile an idea struck me — but, first of all, the answer?

*Pastor.*— Your offer was not exactly received with great joy. And yet, perhaps, he might, after all, have been persuaded, if unfortunately, that affair with Andres had not —

*Stein.*— With Andres? What affair? (*Jumps up.*) I hope he has not met with Robert?

*Pastor.*— This time only with Buchjager —

*Stein (sits down).*— You see I am all a tremble from impatience —

*Pastor.*— Buchjager, drunk, as usual, had him treated as a poacher; and had him whipped —

(*STEIN jumps up again.*)

*Pastor.*— Of course, therefore, it cannot be wondered at, if the old man turned a deaf ear to all and ordered that everyone, except you, who should be found with a gun in the forest shall be treated as a poacher.

*Stein (walks up and down).*— Bastian! (*BASTIAN appears on threshold.*) As soon as Mr. Moller comes — the beast — shall be dismissed — he shall be put in jail — do you hear me?

*Bastian.*— Mr. Moller?

*Stein.*— Buchjager — and Moller too, if he — Come along, Pastor. (*Takes hat and cane.*)

(*BASTIAN off.*)

*Pastor.*— You will —

*Stein.*— Can you ask? Away to the old man. Throw my anger overboard, in spite of Wilkens and Moller.

*Pastor.*— That's right! I'll go with you. (*Rises.*)

*Stein.*— Wait awhile, Pastor! Should that idea have struck me in vain? Listen, what I was thinking just awhile ago, Pastor. How would it be if I were to present Robert this very day with Dusterwalde, as his property? Then he could restore the old man in all honor, and no one would have yielded. I shall make out the deed right now. Go to the Lodge right away, Pastor —

*Pastor.*— With this news —

*Stein.*— Before the old man or the hot-headed boys can commit any mischief, he — (*Gets ready for writing.*)

*Pastor.*— And to-morrow —

*Stein.*— I shall have forgotten all about to-day —

*Pastor.*— And Mr. Stein will as usual, go to the Lodge, knock at the window, and from beneath the white mustache will come forth the usual, ‘Right away’ —

*Stein.*— And if you should meet Robert —

*Pastor.*— I shall be the first to congratulate the new owner of Dusterwalde —

*Stein.*— And take them all down here, the old man, the boys, their mother and the fiancee; then (*following PASTOR to door*) we’ll celebrate the occasion and break the necks of a few bottles of my old Johannisberger — But what’s the matter outside? Who is rushing upstairs like hat? (*On threshold.*) What has happened?

## SCENE IX

(*Preceding ones, later BASTIAN.*)

*Moller* (*enters beside himself*).— Horrible! Horrible!

*Stein.*— But what is the matter?

*Moller.*— A murder! A terrible murder!

*Stein.*— But tell me —

*Moller.*— Master Robert —

*Stein.*— My son! (*Drops into chair.*)

*Pastor.*— Robert assassinated? (*Steps anxiously to STEIN.*)

*Moller.*— Not yet — as yet I hope not — I am beside myself — Andres Ulrich has already killed Buchjager. They go hunting their enemies, the people from the Lodge. — I had Buchjager carried home. He looked fearful. The bullet entered the spine from the left. He died in Master Robert’s arms. I asked him before he died: ‘Was it Andres, Gottfried?’ ‘It was Andres,’ he said. ‘It was Andres.’ — And he stretched out and was done for. I implored Master Robert to go home with me; he was beside himself

and would not. And I had not gone two hundred steps with the men when two more shots were heard behind us.

*Stein (rises, beside himself).*— Mount your horse this very instant — you may kill it galloping — only quick — get the soldiers from town — let them surround the whole forest — Let them all be captured, the murderers from the Lodge. You, Bastian, give me my gun, the loaded one — call the workmen together — they shall arm themselves and go to — where did you say it happened, Moller?

*Moller.*— Near Lautensteg — in the ravine, hardly fifteen minutes from the Lodge.

*Pastor.*— May God prevent the worst.

*Stein (stamping with his foot).*— Bastian! Bastian! What, are you still standing here? Hurry!

(MOLLER off.)

*Stein.*— And I, while — Bastian!

(BASTIAN brings gun.)

*Stein (tearing it away from him).*— I am coming, Robert! Hold out! I am coming!

(All off. Curtain drops.)

## ACT IV

### HUNTING LODGE. TWILIGHT.

#### SCENE I

(WILKENS, SOPHIE.)

*Wilkens.*— Your husband is dismissed, and that's the plain truth. And if he wishes to hold on to his job then he is on the wrong path. Stein is not the man to yield to rebellion. Buchjager is now forester here. Hm! Buchjager! He is a beast of a man, to be sure, but he is in his good right. Now, if Ulrich and he should run up against each other, what then? If they will treat each other as poachers and if Buchjager should again get hold of Andres? And Andres were to deal according to his father's orders! Or Andres and young Stein were to meet? Well, well, well! Anyhow, whichever way you take it, Ulrich is dismissed and a dismissed man cannot find another place so easily, especially after the open resistance he showed. And what will become of you and the children, I should like to know?



*Sophie.*— Cousin, I hope you will not leave us. If you were to speak to him once more!

*Wilkens.*— After the way he treated me? I appreciate my lungs too much to preach to a deaf man. — You and the children must leave him. While on my way home from you the idea struck me and I only came back to tell you that you and the children must go away, before some misfortune or other happens.

*Sophie (wringing her hands).*— Oh! It surely will not come to that!

*Wilkens.*— Well! If you want to wait till something happens, you are all welcome to it! You are a funny kind of a mother! But I am not so indifferent as you and if I can prevent a misfortune I shall do it. In short: If you and your children will leave your husband, you will not have to rue it. That very hour it shall be put on paper that you, the boys and Marie shall be my heirs. I give you time to think it over until to-morrow noon. Twelve o'clock sharp, I shall be waiting for you to-morrow at the Border Inn and we shall go to the notary in town and settle it. Should you not be there — well, it's all the same to me! But I'll be called a scamp — and you know my word is as good as gold — my hand shall be cursed, if ever I were to give a bite of bread to you or yours thereafter. (*Off.*)

*Sophie (overcome at first, then runs after him anxiously and hurriedly).*— But, cousin! Cousin Wilkens! —

## SCENE II

(*MARIE, alone; then SOPHIE, returning.*)

*Marie (a note in her hands).*— Oh! That I took it! Before I had time to think — I had it in my hands — and Katherine ran away so quickly — I ought not to have taken it.

*Sophie (coming in).*— Oh, those men! Nothing avails with them. What is the matter, Marie?

*Marie.*— A letter from Robert.

*Sophie.*— If your father were to see it!

*Marie.*— I don't know how it came that I took it. But I am so sorry for Robert. Katherine told me that he is in the ravine, waiting for me. And, then, I thought of my dream of last night.

*Sophie.*— Your dream?

*Marie.*— I was down at the well, near the willows, at my favorite nook and I sat among the gay flowers and looked up to the sky; a big storm was hanging in the clouds and a strange feeling came over me. And the child, you remember, that fourteen years ago, when I lost my way,

had been with me, sat by me and said: 'Poor Marie' and it took my bridal wreath from my hair and placed a rose, red like blood, on my bosom. I sank back into the grass behind me, I knew no more. Then I heard the bells ring down in the village, the birds sang above me, the crickets chirped, I heard the gentle evening breeze rustle above me in the willows — it all sounded like a cradle song. And I sank deep and deeper; the grass sank with me and the bells and the singing seemed to grow fainter and farther away — the sky became blue once more and I felt so light — oh, so light —

*Sophie.*— A strange dream! Did you open your letter?

*Marie.*— No, mother, nor shall I do so.

*Sophie.*— Well then, don't let father see it — Oh, Marie! We shall have to leave father!

*Marie.*— Leave father? Not we!

*Sophie.*— He is coming, hush! Hide your note. Take the Bible, that he may not suspect anything. I'll make one last attempt — if he thinks we'll leave him, he may, after all, give in and if he does so we can stay.

### SCENE III

*(The stage becomes gradually darker. FORESTER, preceding ones.)*

*Forester.*— Wilhelm not home yet?

*Sophie.*— I did not see him.

*(Forester stepping to window, drumming upon the panes.)*

*(SOPHIE begins packing.)*

*Marie.*— But, mother —

*Sophie.*— Hush, Marie, and don't butt in.

*Forester (turns round and looks on for a short time).*— What are you doing here?

*Sophie (without looking up).*— I am packing a few dresses — if I have to go I —

*Forester.*— We need not go. There are laws.

*Sophie (shaking her head).*— Laws! *(Continues packing.)* I'll have to go away with the children.

*Forester (surprised).*— You will have —

*Sophie.*— If you do not make peace with Stein.

*Forester.*— If —

*Sophie.*— You need not get mad at me, Ulrich. You can't force your nature, nor can I mine. I do not reproach you. I don't say anything. You think those your enemies who advice you to make peace with Stein — And Cousin Wilkens is about to cut off the children in his will, if you

should insist going on that way, and if I and the children will not be with him by twelve o'clock to-morrow. I can't help it! All I can do is — to go away and keep my peace.

*Forester (breathing hard).*— You could —

*Sophie.*— I can do nothing and wish nothing; it is you and cousin Wilkens who wish it. It is you stubborn men who make fate, and we have to suffer in silence. If you were to give in, well! then we could stay. Do you think I like to go? As for myself — I would not mind it and would stick it out until death. But the children — and for your own sake!

*Forester (gloomy).*— Why for my sake?

*Sophie.*— You are deposed, you are poor. As to a new position at your age — after this affair with Stein — you could —

*Forester.*— Accept alms? From my wife and children?

*Sophie.*— Don't get mad. I did not say, 'Give in.' I do not force you. You cannot yield and I cannot stay if you do not give in. — If we must part (*her voice trembles*) then let it be done in friendship. Let us forgive whatever we did to each other, or (*with gentle reproof*) whatever each one thinks the other did to him.

*Forester.*— Then you will go to Wilkens?

*Sophie.*— I must go.

*Forester.*— And the children will go with you?

*Sophie.*— It is for their sakes that I do it.

*Forester.*— Don't you want to take Nero along with you? The dog? Why should the dog stay with a dismissed master? And if I should get my good right, as will be — and when I shall no longer be thought a rascal before the world — then — well — then Nero may come back, you think, he will not leave me? Well, I hope, a beast will not be more stupid than men. My wife and children are wise, and such a beast should be stupid like that? Then the beast should be kicked good and hard for his stupidity! An old man — a ruined man, who, if it went after Stein, would be a scamp with white hairs and such an animal will not take sense! I served honestly for fifty years and am now dismissed as a scamp, because I don't want to become one! I gave my own! And such a poor beast in his kennel will be more grateful than rich Mr. Stein in his castle? Well, then such an animal deserves to be shot, if he is here only to put men to shame—(*a few steps; turns to her, — gently*). We should be two? After twenty-five years? — Well! Let each henceforth carry his burden alone — as long as our hearts can stand it. —

*Sophie.*— Ulrich — (*has to keep MARIE back who wishes to join the FORESTER*).

*Forester.*— Henceforth we shall be two. Go, go! Wilkens is rich

and I am a poor man in spite of my good right. Go after money! I shall not keep you back — But if you say you have done the right thing — then well, it is done now! So no more about it!

## SCENE IV

(WILHELM, *preceding ones.*)

*Forester (sitting at the right).*— Come here, Wilhelm. Where did you leave Andres?

*Wilhelm.*— I waited for him fully fifteen minutes at the Border Inn.

*Forester.*— Did he think you would be later —

*Sophie (to herself).*— Andres not with you? I am always thinking of what Wilkens said!

(MARIE *lights lamp and sets it upon table near FORESTER.*)

*Forester.*— Did you ask the lawyer when the matter could be decided? I mean when I could get my right?

*Wilhelm.*— He refused to bring the matter before the courts.

*Sophie (breathing hard).* That is my last hope!

*Forester (rising, baffled).*— He will —

*Wilhelm.*— He said you were in the wrong, father.

*Forester.*— Wrong? — (*Sits down.*)

*Sophie (as before).*— Wish he were to give in now!

*Wilhelm.*— In the state service they cannot dismiss you without cause. But, he said, you are no official since your master is not the state, but the man who owns the forest, the proprietor of Dusterwalde.

*Forester (doggedly).*— That is to say, if I were a state official then Stein would not be allowed to offend me. And since I am not one he has the right to make a scamp of me? — You did not understand him aright.

*Wilhelm.*— He told me so three times.

*Forester.*— Then you did not tell him how matters stand. Did you tell him that your great-grandfather had already filled the position of Forester in Dusterwalde and your grandfather after him, and that for the past forty years they called me the Forester Presumptive all over the valley?

*Wilhelm.*— That, he said was both an honor to the master and to the servant, but the court does not acknowledge that.

*Forester.*— But he does not know that Stein wants to dismiss me because I wish to do what is best for his property. Does he know that the forest lies open to the north? How can a lawyer know that such a forest is like a vault, where one member props up the others. If a whole, it withstands all, but take out a dozen stones or two and it will go to the deuce.

*Wilhelm.*— He only shrugged his shoulders when I mentioned that.

*Forester (with increasing eagerness).* And what about my money that I put into it? And the trees I planted myself? What about all that? And now the wind will get into them and break what it likes!

*Wilhelm.*— He only smiled at that. He said, you may be and, no doubt, are a very good man, but those things do not concern the courts.

*Forester (rising).*— If a man is good that does not count? Then you have to be a scamp in order to obtain your right in the courts? — But, what about Rupert from Erdmannsgrun? Well, Wilhelm?

*Wilhelm.*— He was in the state service. I went to another lawyer and that one laughed straight in my face. But I gave him a piece of my mind, I tell you.

*Forester.*— Good! But as to the affair with Andres?

*Wilhelm.*— He said, when Andres went into the woods you had already been dismissed. You ought to know yourself that no stranger is allowed to take plants from the forest without a permit and the knowledge of the forester in charge. Buchjager was already legally forester of Dusterwalde, and Andres has no one to blame but himself if he were treated like a poacher. And he would do best to be silent about it and not have the matter dragged into the courts.

(FORESTER sits down; pause; then whistles and drums upon table.)

*Sophie (watching him anxiously).*— If he gets so quiet —

*Forester.*— Well, then, I must remain a scamp in the eyes of the world! Well! — Why don't you hurry packing, you women folk? Wilhelm, a bottle of wine!

*Sophie.*— Wine! And you know it is bad for you, Ulrich! And on top of all the excitement!—

*Forester.*— I want to forget my thoughts.

*Sophie.*— You always get beside yourself after wine, it will be the death of you!

*Forester.*— Better be dead than continue living as a rascal. And in the eyes of the world I shall be a rascal. Wilhelm, a bottle and a glass. Am I no longer master in my own home? Quick, hurry up! Will you?

(WILHELM off.)

*Sophie.*— If you would only change your mind! But you'll not do it, and I must leave!

*Forester.*— That's settled, Sophie. I have made up my mind. Do not lament now! To-morrow we shall part and I shall be off. Although not in the state service, and — well! What's the use? To-day I shall live and be merry!

(WILHELM brings wine; FORESTER pours out and empties glass several

*times in rapid succession, each time a full glass; between times he drums and whistles.)*

*Forester.*—Take away the light, I don't want to see my shadow.

*(WILHELM takes lamp and places it upon table where women sit; sits down with them and takes Bible which was left open.)*

*Sophie (to herself and Marie).*—Andres is not back yet, and it has been dark for a long while, and to-morrow I must go away. Now, I say: 'I must go,' and if it comes to it I am not sure whether I shall have the courage to do it. If you have lived together for twenty-five years, sharing joy and sorrow — and leave the woods which all day long peeped into your windows. How quiet it will seem to us when we shall hear no longer the rustling of the leaves, the singing of the birds and the blows of the axe. And the old Black-forest clock — it ticked like that when I was a bride, and now you came pretty near being one. Yonder in that corner you tried to walk for the first time, three steps, where father sits now, I was sitting and cried for joy. Is this what they call life? An eternal leave-taking? If I were to stay? But then, when I think what Cousin Wilkens said — that might happen if I am not following his advice! If Robert's letter — Wilhelm, go into the yard, I forgot the glass by the well or in the arbor, or somewhere around there.

*(WILHELM off.)*

#### SCENE V

*(Preceding ones without Wilhelm.)*

*(SOPHIE and MARIE in foreground working by lamp. FORESTER now sitting down, now passing by table near window.)*

*Sophie (after having waited till WILHELM is out).*—How would it be if you were to open Robert's letter and see what he wants?

*Marie.*— Shall I open it mother?

*Sophie.*— Perhaps all may come out all right, after all, and Robert may point out a way to us in his letter. If you are afraid to open it, give it to me. If I do it, you need not reproach yourself. *(Opens it.)* If I could read it near the lamp! If I take my glasses he'll notice it. Read it to me, Marie.

*Marie.*— Shall I read it, mother?

*Sophie.*— If I ask you to, you can do it. Here, place it near the Bible, and if he comes near us or if his attention should be drawn to us, then read some passages from the Bible.

*Marie.*— But what?

*Sophie.*— Wherever your eyes hit upon. When I cough then take the Bible. Now the note.

*Marie (reads).*— ‘Dear Marie: I have so much to —’

*Sophie.*— He is getting up from his chair; read from the Bible now, till he gets to the window.

*Marie.*— ‘Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. What blemish he gave, the like shall he be compelled to suffer.’

(FORESTER *drumming upon windowpane.*)

*Sophie (watching him continually).*— Now, the letter again, Marie; till I’ll cough.

*Marie.*— ‘I have so much to tell you. Come to the ravine near the well beneath the willows to-night. I shall wait for you there. Be sure to come, Marie. For to-morrow morning I shall go out into the wide world to make your fortune and mine. If you do not come I shall understand, and you’ll never see — me again —’

*Sophie.*— He is going away from here? Into the wide world? For-ever, if you do not go to meet him? Then all would be lost!

*Marie.*— ‘You’ll never see again your Robert.’

*Sophie (coughs, as the FORESTER turns away from the window)*— The Bible, Marie, quick!

*Marie.*— ‘He that striketh a beast shall render another. He that striketh a man shall be punished. Let there be equal judgment, whether there be a stranger or a native that offends; because I am the Lord, your God.’

*Forester (growing attentive, stops).*— What did you read about equal judgment?

*Marie.*— ‘There shall be equal judgment, whether there be a stranger or a native that offends; because I am the Lord your God.’

*Forester.*— ‘There shall be —’ Where is that passage?

*Marie.*— Here, father, up here to the left.

*Forester.*— Mark the passage at its beginning, the one you read just now about the judgment — Do you see now that I am right? Even if I am denied my right! Do you see that my heart did not betray me? ‘There shall be equal judgment.’ Not one law for state officials and one for others. In those days the laws were still sound; in those days law was not closed up in dusty and dull rooms. The judgment was pronounced in the open, under God’s free sky, as you can read now! If I had my way, the courts would be kept in the forests; it is in the woods only that men’s hearts remain hale and sound; there people can distinguish between right and wrong without their ‘Ifs’ and ‘Buts’. In their dusty and dull rooms, the law has become sick and dull and has faded, so that it can be shaped in any old way they like; and now the wrong must be sealed and signed as right. They have taken away the value of man’s word and make light of

it, since only that needs be kept what is sworn, sealed, and signed; and the good old right is turned so that an old man who would not allow the least spot upon his honor is pronounced a scamp before men — because men in their dull rooms have two kinds of law instead of one. (*Sits down and drinks.*)

*Sophie.* — It is getting dark and Andres not back! And to have to listen to such words would frighten anyone! If you were to go to Robert —

*Marie.* — To Robert? What are you thinking of, mother?

*Sophie.* — That God made Robert send that letter.

*Marie.* — I shall go to Robert? Now? To the ravine?

*Sophie.* — And why not? You are not afraid?

*Marie.* — Afraid! (*Proudly.*) Ulrich's daughter and afraid!

*Sophie.* — How often you went into the woods later than this!

*Marie.* — Yes, but then father knew of it. If father wishes it and you, too, then I know that there will be an angel behind every tree. — And father said, 'If I do not know my Marie' —

*Sophie.* — I cannot get away without his noticing it — All might turn out well — but — well! It is not to be, I guess. And your dream? You felt so light, the sky turned deep blue — You see, in the ravine, near the well, behind the willows there your troubles and ours will end.

*Marie (shaking her head).* — Do you think so, mother?

*Sophie.* — If you were to go! Then we might be able to stay with father. Robert would talk it over with his father. Cousin Wilkens would give in, too, and the bridal wreath would be so becoming to you!

*Marie.* — And am I to deceive father? Then, mother, I fully think I shall never again be happy, if I were to do that.

*Sophie.* — But you are doing it for his good! If to-morrow he has to leave and has to go out into an uncertain future, into the wide, cruel, world, or if they were to imprison him, or even do worse to him —

*Marie.* — To father?

*Sophie.* — Yes, then you will say too late, 'Wish I had gone!

*Marie.* — But, mother, if I were in the woods and father should meet me there? Or were to see me with Robert?

*Sophie.* — We must make sure if he'll go out again or stay in to-night.

*Marie.* — I cannot look at him, it breaks my heart!

*Sophie.* — Ask him about his soup.

*Marie.* — Yes! (*Approaches the FORESTER timidly, stops beside him without his taking any notice of it.*)

*Sophie (encouragingly).* — Don't be silly, now!

*Marie (gently).* — Father! (*Bending over him; beside herself with compassion.*) Father, poor father! (*Is about to embrace him.*)



*Forester (looking around roughly).*—What's the matter! Stop talking about it!

*Sophie (as MARIE loses her composure).*—Marie wanted—

*Marie (overcoming her emotion).*—Are you going back to the forest to-night?

*Forester.*—Why?

*Marie.*—Because—

*Sophie (interrupting, afraid MARIE may betray herself and tell the truth).*—

On account of the soup, she wants to know whether she can heat it now?

*Forester.*—No, I am not going out again. Well, you stupid head? Anything else you want? (*Turns away as MARIE is hesitating. Roughly.*) Do you hear me?

*Marie (to SOPHIE).*—Mother, he cried! I saw a tear, mother! And here I am about to deceive him!

*Sophie.*—He is crying, because in his old age he has to go out into the wide world.—And you—well, you need not go.

*Marie.*—Don't talk like that, mother. I am going.

*Sophie.*—Well, then say good night; it is about time. I'll help you out of the window. Robert must be waiting now and you will soon be back.

*Marie.*—Yes, I am going mother. But not for Robert's sake, nor for mine. I do it for father. I'll tell him: 'Robert,' I shall say to him: 'you can find another girl more beautiful and better than I, but my father cannot find another daughter if I leave him.' That's what I shall tell him. 'Robert,' I'll say, 'I'll forget you! God will forgive me, that I can forget you. Stay away from me, so that I may not see you again.' You think he will not do it, mother? He will do it, I tell you; I loved him so much, oh, so dearly!

*Sophie.*—Go! Go, say good night and don't let him notice anything.

*Marie (standing at side of her father).*

*Sophie.*—Marie wants to bid good night.

*Forester.*—Well, can't she do it herself? Stupid old girl!

*Marie (overcoming her emotion).*—Good night, father.

*Forester.*—Good night.—You need not wait for me in the morning, when you go to cousin Wilkens. I'll probably leave before you. I have some business to attend, and I don't know whether I shall be back—And take Nero with you—and all the rest that is left—take it all. I'll not need anything—except my tools, my gun and—powder and lead. The other guns can be sold. Go to Wilkens, you poor girlie, you; he may get Robert back, perhaps—If I'll be out of the way; when the people will have forgotten that your father was a dismissed man.

*Marie.*— Good night! (*Beside herself.*) Good night, father!

*Forester.*— That sounds as if it were forever, girlie — But right you are, Marie. A stain like this one must come out, such a one as I am upon your good, honest name. Go now, Marie. Do you hear?

*Marie.*— You shall stay, father and if you go, I'll go with you.

*Forester.*— The way I have before me is for one alone. Go now, Marie.

*Sophie.*— Go to bed, Marie.

*Forester.*— Good night, and now be done with. You know I don't like so much ado.

*Marie.*— You'll not go without me, father; you cannot live without me, father, I know that from my own self, you cannot!

*Forester (turning away).*— Well, I declare! I should like to know all the things such a girl imagines she knows.

*Marie.*— You are turning away from me, father, so that I shall not see your tears. Be as rude as you like —

*Forester (tearing himself away).*— You stupid —

*Marie.*— I'll go with you! You insist upon your rights and I upon mine, and mine is that I must not leave you when you need me most. Father, only now I learned to know that there is nobody in the wide world whom I love better and dearer than you. To-morrow the two of us will leave together — if leave you must. I'll put on Wilhelm's cloth. There are plenty of green woods in the world! And I shall never complain, you need not fear. I can weep at night when you'll not see it! But, then true, you might know it from my eyes in the morning. I need not cry at all. I'll only laugh and dance and sing for you all your favorite hunters' songs. — Look here, father, this was my last tear for Robert, and it has dried away already. We'll find some happiness somewhere in the world — if you must leave, father. And, if you need not do so, we shall thank God for it and pray to him to make us good. Then we'll think it would be asking too much of Him to grant us happiness likewise. Have I not got you? Have you not your right and your daughter? What else do we need. (*Upon his neck.*)

*Forester (pushing her away, almost wildly, because overcome with emotion).*— To be sure! To be sure! Stupid goose! (*Calmer.*) Now! Now! What else to complete the fairy tale? Go to bed Marie. (*Rudely.*) Did you hear me?

*Sophie.*— Come, Marie!

*Marie (turns at the door to her room, hurries back to him; embraces him wildly).*— Good night! Good night! (*Hurries to her room, SOPHIE following.*)

*Forester (looking after her).*— My girlie, my poor girlie! It must not be done here, not here! Heavens! Aren't you ashamed of yourself, you old —

## SCENE VI

(WEILER, FORESTER.)

(WEILER, *greeting silently; he is excited; hangs his gun on the hook and busies himself with the hunting utensils.*)

Forester (*watching him*).— Is it you? (*Resuming his thoughts.*)

Weiler.— It is I!

Forester.— From where do you come?

Weiler.— From the woods — At the grove I met your boy Wilhelm. Well then, they dismissed you, after all!

Forester.— Because there are two kinds of law.

Weiler.— And did you find that out only now?

Forester.— You got your wages three months ahead.

Weiler.— And can go! I know that without your telling me! Where is Wilhelm? Oh, yes, I met him, I forgot! And Andres?

Forester (*half absent-minded*).— Is not home.

Weiler.— But, I hope you know where he is?

Forester (*impatiently*).— What do you want from him? Leave me in peace!

Weiler.— For my part, it's indifferent to me!

Forester.— Therefore, I think, you had better go.

Weiler.— Well! Well! And you don't know where he is?

Forester.— Andres! And always Andres! What about him? If you know anything about him, don't be like a thunder storm standing in the sky for hours before coming down.

Weiler (*pointing to window*).— There's one coming now from down across Lautenberg. The birds screamed in fear. I thought it would come, it was so sultry. — Ulrich — (*Approaching him.*) An hour ago — some one was shot dead.

Forester.— Do you know who?

Weiler.— And you don't know? If Andres were home —

Forester.— Andres, and always Andres! You know something about him.

Weiler.— Hm! The gun — listen, did Andres take the one with the yellow strap?

Forester.— Why?

Weiler (*thoughtfully*).— I know your gun, I should say, if I see it!

Forester.— What are you at?

Weiler.— It is not in the house?

Forester.— I'll not answer any questions. I had too much wine as it is.

*Weiler.*— Now, be on your guard that you make no mistake.

*Forester.*— Be on your guard that I don't break your neck.

*Weiler.*— It is no joke that —

*Forester.*— You'll find that out soon enough!

*Weiler.*— I only know what I saw and heard. Sit down. I don't feel like standing, I tell you! I guess I must look like my clay pipe here. (*FORESTER sits at table at right; WEILER pushes a chair close to him, speaks hastily and in a low voice.*) Well as I left the wood-cutters after our day's work, I heard a shot coming from the ravine. I thought it was you and I went in the direction of the shot. But it must have been Robert Stein, for he went up and down like a sentinel on guard. So I thought: 'What is he in ambush for? Not waiting for game; I must go and see.' So I, behind the big oak and from there I thought I might see all that'll go on. But before I could get there I heard a lot of holloing and much adoing going on. What do you think I heard? Andres and Robert quarreling like mischief. I could not well make it all out, but I could hear this much, that it was a question of life and death. I was just about to get closer to them, when they came running along. The one yonder across the rocky pass over the brook, the other one on this side. The one on this side was Robert, his gun ready for shooting. Two feet from me he stopped. 'Halt! Or I'll shoot!' Nobody can escape on that pass. All a person can do there is to defend one's self! — And then — one — two shots, one after another in quick succession. The bullet coming from the rocks whistled past me and Robert. But young Stein's shot — Ulrich! I have heard many shots fired, but none like that one. It could be heard by the sound of it that a human life was at stake. I don't know, but I felt queer when the other one broke down like a stag —

*Forester.*— Andres?

*Weiler.*— Who else do you think it could have been? Is he perhaps home? Do you know where else he is? The one who was hit had the gun with the yellow strap. He held tight on to it; the strap almost lit up the twilight; it looked like a signal of distress. It sounded gruesome like when the iron of the gun struck against the cliffs and the corpse came down, breaking bushes in its fall, until it splashed into the brook. — And when it became quite still I ran like one haunted. I should have reached the Lodge half an hour ago, if I had not lost my way. I, who know every tree here! You may well imagine how I felt! When I reached the second bridge near Haslau I took courage and stopped for a minute and by chance looked into the brook and saw how the waters were playing with this kerchief. Here it is. Do you recognize it per chance? (*Draws forth ANDRES' kerchief and shows it to FORESTER; the latter tears it from his hands.*)

*Forester.*— Visions — the wine — (*He holds the kerchief now near, now far away, without being able to see it.*)

*Weiler* (*short pause*).— You are so quiet. Is there anything wrong with you?

(*FORESTER sighs deeply, stares mechanically at kerchief, without seeing it.*)

*Weiler.*— Your face is all contorted. I'll call your wife.

*Forester* (*making a motion as if pushing away a burden*).— Never mind! Just a little dizzy. The wine — It'll pass — Don't tell anybody — (*Rises with evident pains.*)

*Weiler.*— Then, after all, they must have got to fighting, Andres and Robert! But what will you do now? You are dismissed! And Robert need only say: 'I warned the poacher before I shot and he did not throw down his gun!' You know as well as anybody that it is the hunter's right to shoot. He does not even need to give warning. If he hits properly, then he is in the right. You know the law now, such as it is nowadays! And, moreover, you may be arrested for insubordination. I'm sorry for you. I am glad I'm not in your skin!

*Forester.*— The storm is across the Lautenberg now, do you hear it? If you tarry any longer the rain will catch you.

*Weiler.*— It has been lightning for quite awhile, as I passed the ravine, I saw Robert going up and down by the willows.

(*FORESTER goes to door so that WEILER may see that he is waiting for him to leave.*)

*Weiler.*— Are you going to try the lawyer once more? Indeed, if you were in the government service! But what will you do?

*Forester.*— Nothing.

*Weiler.*— I don't believe you —

*Forester.*— You fool, you — I want to go to bed.

*Weiler.*— It's not late enough.

*Forester.*— I want to close up for the night.

*Weiler* (*since he cannot do otherwise, hesitating*).— Well, sleep well, Ulrich — if you can —

(*Exit, FORESTER after him.*)

## SCENE VII

(*SOPHIE, later FORESTER and WILHELM.*)

*Sophie* (*coming from MARIE'S room*).— Now she must be where the willows begin. (*By window.*) He's closing the shutters. I must act as if I were closing them in Marie's room, so that she can get in on her return. Andres not back yet! I feel now all of a sudden as if I ought not to have let Marie go out.

(FORESTER and WILHELM coming in; SOPHIE going back to MARIE'S room.)

*Wilhelm (while entering).*— Father, Lore Kramer told me that Stein is beside himself, shots were heard in the woods — Robert was not home — And Stein sent Moller to town to get the soldiers. He was heard saying that they were to arrest the whole band of murderers in the Lodge. Moller rode full gallop past Kramer's. They may be here before one o'clock.

*Forester (while SOPHIE is coming out of MARIE'S room).*— What have you to do out doors so late as this? (*Looks around.*)

*Wilhelm.*— I was in the yard, father. Mother, there wasn't any glass in the arbor.

*Sophie.*— Well, I guess I must have taken it with me somewhere. (*To FORESTER.*) Are you looking for anything?

*Forester.*— I? No! Oh, yes! The gun with the yellow strap. I wonder where I left it? Perhaps in Marie's room —

*Sophie (covering door quickly).*— There's no gun there.

*Wilhelm.*— Andres took it with him when he went to accompany me.

*Forester.*— All right! (*Pulls out kerchief.*) I have somebody's kerchief here in my pocket. Is it yours, Wilhelm?

*Sophie.*— The red and yellow one? That's Andres'!

*Forester.*— He left it here yesterday, I took it by mistake.

*Sophie.*— Yesterday? To-day, you mean. I gave it him before he left.

*Forester.*— You gave him — all right!

*Sophie (approaching).*— Yes, that's Andres' kerchief. (*Examines it.*) It is marked here, you see?

*Forester (about to take it away from her).*— Give it.

*Sophie.*— It is wet. — And there's blood on it!

*Forester.*— Blood? (*Composing himself.*) From my hand. I cut myself when handling the gun. Go now!

*Sophie (busies herself on one side of stage).*

*Forester.*— Wilhelm, come here. Read this passage here in the Bible, here where I marked it.

*Wilhelm.*— In the middle of the chapter?

*Forester.*— Go ahead! (*Gets his hat.*)

*Wilhelm (reads).*— 'And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord —'

*Forester.*— That's not what I mean. (*Puts gun over his shoulder.*)

*Wilhelm.*— 'He that striketh and killeth a man' — Is that the passage?

*Forester (feelingly, approaching him).*— No — but read it. (*Stands near Wilhelm; during the following, he takes off his hat and folds his hands over it.*)

*Wilhelm.*— ‘He that killeth and striketh a man, dying let him die.’

*Forester.*— ‘Let him die.’

*Wilhelm.*— ‘Let there be equal judgment among you, whether he be a stranger, or a native that offends; because I am the Lord your God.’

*Forester.*— Amen! (*Puts on hat and is about to go; turns round.*)

When do you think they can be here, Wilhelm?

*Wilhelm.*— The soldiers?

*Forester.*— Before —

*Wilhelm.*— Before one o’clock.

*Forester.*— Time enough.

*Wilhelm.*— For what, father?

*Forester.*— To sleep!

*Wilhelm.*— Father, why do you look at me that queer way?

*Forester.*— Go to bed, Wilhelm. (*As SOPHIE enters.*) Shake hands with mother.

*Sophie (in surprise).*— Are you going out again?

*Forester.*— Yes.

*Sophie.*— Did Weiler scent the stag again?

*Forester.*— Yes, may be!

*Sophie.*— How queer you look! I’d be afraid of you if I did not know how you are after you have had wine.

*Forester.*— That’s why I want to get out once more.

*Sophie.*— Don’t, you might fall into the ravine!

*Forester.*— Then cut out this page from the Bible and put it in my coffin.

*Sophie.*— How you talk!

*Forester.*— Go to bed, Wilhelm. (*WILHELM exits.*) Pray — or rather, don’t pray —

*Sophie.*— What is the matter with you, Christian? Why, I am really frightened! Stay, for God’s sake, stay!

*Forester.*— No, things must be attended to-night. (*Goes.*)

*Sophie (about to follow).*— Ulrich —

*Forester (turning round at door, softly to himself).*— ‘Eye for eye — tooth for tooth!’ (*Off.*)

*Sophie (retreating as a flash of lightning brightens the room suddenly).*— God have mercy on us! (*Through open door.*) Ulrich! Ulrich! (*Sound dying away from outside.*)

CURTAIN

ACT V

(*Lodge. Night; for a moment stage is vacant.*)

## SCENE I

*Sophie (alone, enters a lamp in her hand, looking into MARIE'S room, then places lamp upon table, goes to window, opens shutters; distant lightning falls through window; she looks out; closes window again and shutters, takes up lamp and looks into MARIE'S room. Between times she listens and shows signs of great fear).*— Not back yet! If he met her! If he saw them together! By now she ought to be back. Wish I had not let her go. And Andres not home either! And such a stormy, sultry night! (*Listens.*) That's Marie, at last! God be thanked! (*Goes to MARIE'S room with lamp.*) No, it is not she. It was the wind pushing against the half closed shutters.

## SCENE II

(*WILHELM in shirt sleeves, SOPHIE.*)

*Wilhelm.*— Have the soldiers come, mother? (*At door of MARIE'S room.*) Mother, where is father?

(*SOPHIE, frightened, closes door quickly.*)

*Wilhelm.*— And Marie? She is not in her room, is she?

*Sophie.*— What strikes you?

*Wilhelm.*— Well, her bed was not disturbed.

*Sophie (listens frightened).*— Is this father coming? Wilhelm, don't tell father!

*Wilhelm.*— I'm no tell-tale! But you must tell me where Marie has gone.

*Sophie.*— To the ravine, to ask Robert to —

*Wilhelm.*— Mother, we don't go a begging! I'll call her back.

*Sophie.*— In this storm?

*Wilhelm (buttoning his jacket).*— Well, I declare! A forester's boy afraid of a little lightning! Tell me which way Marie took. The one along the water? All right! She is not like other girls, but she is a girl, and they are easily frightened. (*Exit.*)

## SCENE III

(*SOPHIE alone, running after him.*)

*Sophie.*— Wilhelm! Wilhelm! (*Returning.*) He's gone! The storm is getting worse! Down in the valley, fog, and up here the storm! And another storm coming from the west. Ulrich out, and none of the children home, and I am all alone in the Lodge in the midst of the forest, and so late at night. (*A door is heard banging, she gets more frightened.*) God Almighty! It is he! If he were to look into the room and find out that Marie is gone, or —



## SCENE IV

(FORESTER hurries in very pale, SOPHIE.)

Sophie (goes to meet him).— Are you already back? — (Correcting herself.) At last!

Forester (looking around, shyly).— Did anyone ask for me?

Sophie.— No, are they after you?

Forester.— Who?

Sophie.— Buchjager and —

Forester.— Why?

Sophie.— Because you look like one haunted.

Forester.— I meant the soldiers — I am seeing Marie everywhere!

In the ravine —

Sophie (frightened).— In the ravine — (To herself.) Good Lord!

Forester.— And on my way home I heard her walk behind me.

Sophie.— On your way home —

Forester.— Whenever I walked I heard her steps behind me; whenever I stopped, she did the same, but I did not look back.

Sophie (easier).— You did not look back?

Forester.— I knew it could not be she. — I feel as if she were still behind me!

Sophie (endeavoring to divert his attention).— Did you kill anything? Is it outside?

Forester (shuddering).— Outside?

Sophie.— Yes, before the door. Why! How you stare at me! What is this?

Forester (involuntarily turning away).— What?

Sophie.— A stain —

Forester.— All you see —

Sophie.— Why do you hide it?

Forester.— It is nothing. (Turns to table at right, puts down his gun.) Is the soup warm? My mouth is parched.

Sophie (takes a plate and spoon from cupboard, goes to stove with it, where she pours out the soup).— If he should look into the room! All my questions are only prompted by fear, so that he may forget to ask for Marie. (Places the soup before the FORESTER on table at right; listens.) Something is stirring in the room! (Near FORESTER to distract his thoughts.) Ulrich, don't you think Robert will straighten out things after all?

(FORESTER, motion.)

Sophie.— Why that motion?

*Forester.*— Don't wake up Marie! — Was not somebody at the window just now?

*Sophie.*— No, it's only the old rose bush outside, it is always nodding and knocking against the window as if it had to prevent a great misfortune, and on one listening to it—(*Pause, to herself.*) It is so quiet. I must talk, or he'll hear Marie climbing in the window on her return. (*Listening between times.*) I was thinking all night long. Only yesterday Robert told me —

*Forester.*— Robert and always Robert —

*Sophie (sits down by his side).*— We passed by the willows, where the pines are so thick, beneath the rocks, in the ravine —

*Forester (violently).*— Leave the ravine out, will you? I —

*Sophie.*— What are you so excited about? It was at sunset — as I looked around something came forth from beneath the pines — it was red. I — in terror — 'God have mercy upon us,' says I to myself, 'That is blood!'

*Forester (throwing spoon away, rising suddenly).*—

*Sophie.*— It was only the reflex of the setting sun, playing upon the water. — But, what is the matter?

*Forester.*— You and your ravine! What do I care about the ravine?

*Sophie.*— Did anything happen to you there? They say it is not quite safe there. Robert told me yesterday that a curse rests upon it, somebody committed a murder —

*Forester (seizing his gun).*— What do you know about —

*Sophie (retreating in fear).*— Ulrich!

*Forester.*— Will you be silent?

*Sophie (stands before him shuddering, full of foreboding fear).*— Ulrich! What did you do?

*Forester (composing himself).*— Nonsense! It's a bad night for such stories, that's all! (*In thought.*)

*Sophie.*— Shoot me! What's the use? Sooner or later you'll be the death of me anyhow! (*Falls down into chair.*)

*Forester (pause, then walks slowly and hesitatingly towards her).*— I must tell you something, Sophie — if you should not happen to know it already — I have no peace, until — I am in the right. But — and, moreover, I'm not sure whether it is true, or only a bad dream of the kind in which we can't do what we want to — and in which we get exhausted — because we must do what we don't want to do. — Come here! Did you hear? Put three fingers upon the Bible.

*Sophie.*— Lord! What can it be?

*Forester.*— It would be awful if I had to kill her, and perhaps all is,

but — and then all would have been in vain — Sophie, — (*Very close; almost in a whisper.*) They say there's somebody dead in the ravine.

*Sophie.* — You're drunk or mad!

*Forester.* — I'm in the right. Look at me, woman, do you believe in a God in heaven? All right! Then, place three fingers upon the Bible. Here my right is in black and white. Now, repeat what I say: 'As I hope to be saved —'

*Sophie (overcome).* — 'As I hope to be saved —'

*Forester.* — 'So all I now hear shall remain a secret!'

*Sophie.* — 'So all I now hear shall remain a secret.' (*Has to sit down.*)

*Forester.* — And now, mind! — It is a short story — there are no 'Ifs' and 'Buts' in it — it is clear as day — and right must and will remain right! — or else we don't need a God in heaven! (*After several attempts oppressed, and in a low voice, leading her to foreground.*) Don't get frightened! Robert killed Andres, and I — I took justice into my own hands.

*Sophie.* — Almighty! (*Cannot support herself any longer; wants to get to a chair; he holds her firmly.*)

*Forester.* — I judged him myself. As it is written: 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for an tooth!' I took justice into my own hands, because the courts are not just. They have two kinds of law, and it is written: 'There shall be one law.' I did not murder him. (*Goes up and down, deep in thoughts at the spot where he thinks SOPHIE still to be standing, the latter meanwhile totters to a chair.*) But I don't know whether all has really happened — all that has happened. My head feels so queer, so wild — (*Comes slowly to his senses.*) But it did happen, I guess, — all! all — And Marie is always before me, as if she hurled herself before him and beckoned me back and cried: 'It is he!' — Well! You know whom I mean. It is nonsense, of course, it's only a vision. After having partaken in wine, I always see things that are not real. And if it had been she — the shot was no longer in my power.

*Sophie.* — Good Lord! (*Drags herself into MARIE'S room.*)

*Forester (not noticing it, continues gazing before him, as if SOPHIE were still near him).* — It was not Marie. How could she have gotten there. It's only the wine that makes me see her everywhere! But I was frightened until I knew that it was the smoke from the shot. All was like a circle before my eyes. But when the smoke had vanished — then for a moment — then he broke down, then it was done, the thing I meant to do. I folded my hands above the gun and said, 'You got your dues.' And I prayed, 'God have mercy upon his soul.' Several owls flew skyward and hooted, it seemed as if they were saying, 'Amen' and I became calmer. For God, heaven and earth and all creatures want their right! (*Falls to thinking.*)

## SCENE V

(FORESTER *in thoughts, alone; then* STEIN, PASTOR, *at first heard from behind the scene.*)

*Stein (outside).* — Ulrich!

*Forester (awakening, mechanically).* — Stein!

*Stein (as above).* — Ulrich, do you hear?

*Forester (suddenly talking connectedly).* — And it did really occur! (*Grasps his gun; but composes himself.*) No, nothing but my good right.

*Stein (entering, PASTOR behind him).* — Where is Andres, Ulrich?

*Forester.* — What do you want of him?

*Stein.* — Ask Robert from him!

*Forester.* — Robert? From Andres? — Look here (*shows kerchief.*)

*Pastor.* — For Heaven's sake! — There's blood on it!

*Stein.* — What is it?

*Forester.* — That's the blood of my boy, and your son shed it. You sent Moller for the soldiers and you made a scoundrel of me. You with your two kinds of law! So that you may suit the law to yourselves. But here (*beats his chest*) there is still a right here, that will not yield to you or to your lawyers.

## SCENE VI

(ANDRES, *first heard from the outside; preceding ones.*)

*Andres (softly, from outside).* — Father!

*Pastor.* — Who is calling?

*Stein.* — Was that not Andres' voice?

*Forester (continuing).* — Here it is: 'There shall be one law.' And the law has judged you. 'Whosoever kills a man, shall —'

*Andres.* — Father!

*Forester (trembling, stares at door, voiceless, mechanically).* — 'Shall — shall — shall — die.'

(ANDRES *enters.*)

*Stein (goes to meet ANDRES).* Thank God! Andres, you're alive.

*Forester (regains composure).* — It is not true! He is dead, he must be dead! He shall be dead!

*Andres.* — Father!

*Forester (stretching out his hands to ward him off).* — Who are you?

*Andres (with increasing fear).* — Don't you know your own son?

*Forester.* — My boy is dead. If you are lying dead in the ravine — then — then you are my son, then all is well, then we'll be happy, then we shall sing, 'Hallelujah, hallelujah!'

*Pastor.* — He is bereft of his senses.

*Stein.* — Andres, my boy Robert —

*Andres.* — You have my kerchief here, which Lindenschmied stole from me, before he killed Buchjager.

*Stein.* — Lindenschmied? — Buchjager? — And Robert? —

*Andres.* — Robert pursued him. He forced Robert to shoot at him.

*Forester.* — Did he — did he have your gun?

*Andres.* — Stole it with my neckerchief.

*Forester.* — And Robert did? —

*Andres.* — Lindenschmied was not fatally shot; I had his wounds dressed and had him taken to jail —

*Forester (breaking down).* — I am wrong! (*Drops into chair.*)

*Andres.* — That's why I am so late coming home.

*Forester (rising, goes to STEIN with his gun).* — Stein, do to me as I deserve!

*Stein.* — What do you mean?

*Forester.* — 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' —

*Stein (looking at FORESTER in blank amazement).* — What in the world is he at now?

*Forester.* — Weiler took Lindenschmied for Andres. Your boy shot Lindenschmied, and — I — killed your Robert for it!

*Pastor.* — Lord!

*Andres (at same time).* — Robert?

*Forester.* — Shoot me!

*Stein (tears gun from FORESTER).* — Murderer!

(*PASTOR stops his arm.*)

*Andres (action very quick).* — Robert, Father? Why, Robert is alive!

*Stein.* — Alive?

*Pastor.* — Alive?

*Forester.* — Alive? — He — is — alive?

*Andres.* — As much as you and I!

*Forester.* — Then it was a dream? I am no murderer? I am a respectable, honest man?

*Pastor.* — That you surely are, Ulrich. Forget those terrible illusions.

*Stein.* — Ulrich, what an awful crime was about to be committed! (*Puts down gun.*)

*Forester.* — Did you see him? When was it, Andres? Just now, Andres? Was it just now?

*Andres.* — Only this minute, as I went home, I met two men from the mill, carrying a litter. Robert called them from their beds; they went towards the ravine; Robert was somewhat ahead of them.

*Forester.* — To the ravine?

*Pastor.* — With a litter?

*Stein.* — What next, I wonder?

*Forester (running wildly toward's MARIE's room; withdraws his hand from handle of door).* — The Lord be praised! (*Listens.*) I hear her breath. Oh! She sleeps so peacefully! Do you hear her, Pastor?

*Stein.* — The unfortunate man! His insanity is coming on again!

*Pastor (after a pause of anxiety, during which the FORESTER gazes in the latter's face).* — I don't hear anything. It's your own heavy breath you are hearing.

*Forester (begins to break down again).* — My own heavy breath? — (*Composing himself.*) My eyes must deceive me! Where she is not I see her, and where she is, I can't see her. Sir Pastor, for the love of God, tell me, say: 'Marie is in bed in that room in there!' (*Takes arm of Pastor convulsively.*)

*Pastor.* — I don't see her. The bed has not been touched, the windows are open — Mrs. Ulrich!

*Forester (rushes into MARIE's room).* — My wife, my wife! My unhappy wife!

## SCENE VII

(*SOPHIE, like a ghost, can hardly walk or talk. FORESTER forces her to come in; preceding ones.*)

*Forester.* — Where is my child?

*Andres.* — Mother, what is the matter with you? (*Supports her on one side, PASTOR on the other.*)

*Sophie.* — Andres! At least one of you near!

*Forester (shaking her violently).* — My child! My girlie! Where is my child?

*Sophie (in utter disgust, but weak).* — Leave me, you —

*Forester.* — My daughter!

*Sophie.* — She went to the ravine — you — you —

*Forester.* — You lie!

*Sophie.* — To see Robert —

*Forester.* — Yes, I met her — in the fog — as I —

*Sophie.* — That was Wilhelm —

*Forester.* — It was Marie, woman, I tell you, it was Marie!

*Pastor.* — Don't you see she can't answer you? She has fainted.

*Stein.* — Take the mad man away from her!

*Forester.* — You mean to say that I —

*Andres.* — Mother! Mother! (*He and the pastor busy with her at table to right.*)

*Stein (endeavouring to keep FORESTER away from her).*— Let her go, mad man! Will you?

*Forester.*— Mad! Wish to God that I were! (*Knocking, steps back in horror; stretches out his hands against door.*) Nonsense! What do you want, all of you? Here is Marie now! She is outside and does not dare come in, because she ran away at night. She knows I am very strict with her—indeed—I am—You stupid girl! (*Jumps up.*) Let happen what will! (*Rushes to door; before he reaches it knocks are repeated; he steps back again in horror and faints.*) The fever—it is epidemic, that's all! These are the symptoms; chills all along the spine. Black tea will settle it all—But what in the world has the knocking to do with the fever? Why don't you open the door? Let somebody call and ask. Why are you all so pale? Why don't you talk? Did they tell you a fairy tale? Is that why you are afraid? Marie is a living fairy tale—she is—she is—I tell you! Marie will not play such a trick upon me and die. She knows I cannot live without her! Do you hear her giggling now? She'll be in right away. She'll hold her hands over my eyes as she always does and I must not spoil the fun. Oh! (*he wants to laugh but sobs*).—sooner or later we must—Come in! (*Wants to go to door, but drops in a chair to left, hiding his face.*)

## SCENE VIII

(ROBERT, WILHELM, the two men carrying a covered litter; after placing the litter on the floor the men leave; preceding ones.)

*Stein.*— Robert! (*Rushes to meet him.*) You see, Ulrich, he is alive!

*Robert (falling into his arms, pale and beside himself).*— Father! Father

*Stein.*— What ails you?

*Robert.*— Wish the murderer had hit me! Father Ulrich, be a man.

*Forester (with a last effort).*— Go on, I'll see if I am one!

*Robert (takes cover from litter).*

*Stein.*— Good Lord!

*Sophie (supported by ANDRES and PASTOR falls down upon her knees before litter).*— Marie! Marie!

*Andres.*— Lord! My sister!

*Stein (very quick action of all).*— How did it happen? Explain, Robert!

*Pastor.*— It's only too clear to me!

*Robert (regaining composure with great effort).*— She was just praying, 'Oh, Lord! Let me belong to my father only.' I was about to say to her, 'Marie, are you giving me up?' when she jumps up all of a sudden, as if she wished to cover me with her own body, beckoned and calls into the forest. I, not seeing anyone, did not understand her and was about to ask, 'What is the

matter, Marie?' A shot is fired — she breaks down, sinks into my arms, I over her, in less than a second, a bullet had penetrated her heart.

*Sophie.* — Her dream!

*Stein* (holds ROBERT in his arms, almost at same time). — She died for you.

*Forester.* — She saw me aim at him and ran into my path to save him. I wanted to take judgment into my hands and — judged myself. Crime and punishment at the same time. I prayed, 'God have mercy upon his poor soul,' I prayed for my own self and the owls hooted 'Amen' and meant me!

*Robert* (stepping back in horror). — Lord! — He — himself —

*Stein.* — You did not mean to do it. A horrible illusion took hold of you against your own will.

*Pastor.* — Don't be so rigid, Ulrich. God will not judge you like that. Innocence and crime are judged by a merciful God.

*Forester.* — Give me words of eternal life, no 'Ifs' or 'Buts.' Tell me something that I must believe in. Your talk does not convince me. Why do you comfort my mind? Give comfort to my heart, if you can. Can you revive my child with your talk so that she will rush into my arms? If you can do that, then you may comfort me. Words that cannot revive my child, kill her all over again.

*Stein.* — Flee to America! I'll look out for the passport! My money is at your disposal. Your wife and children shall be like my own flesh and blood!

*Forester.* — Do you hear, Andres, what that man tells us? He'll give you money galore! Buy a grinding organ with it and go out into the streets and market places and sing a song of an old murderer, who shot and killed his child. For no reason whatsoever! You don't need a picture of the crime; take that old woman with you, no painter can paint the story better than is depicted upon her face. Boast about the child. Make her more beautiful than she really was — if you can do that — describe her as you imagine the most beautiful angel and then tell the people, 'She was a thousand times more beautiful.' And tell about the old murderer in such a way that every street urchin will be ready to lynch him and that men, women and children with any feeling in them will pray to God for the child, and curse the murderer who shot her. Don't tell them the man was honest all his life and guarded himself from doing wrong and believed in God and did not allow a stain upon his honor, or they'll not believe you. Tell them he looked like a wolf, don't tell them that his beard was white when he committed the crime or they'll not believe you. And beneath it draw a picture in which the old scamp shoots himself and walks around



by night as a ghost. And on the spot where the deed was done he is sitting by night, with glowing eyes, moaning, and no breeze passes over that spot; no dew and no rain will ever fall upon it; poisonous flowers grow there, it is cursed, cursed, cursed. Cursed like the murderer himself! And the beast passing by howls in fear and terror, and men are overcome by inexpressible dread, and the fever seizes them. Abel was a man and Cain was only his brother, but she was his child and he who killed her was her father. For Cain there is salvation, but there is none for the murderer of his child — none — none — none. Oh, give me comfort! I'll give my salvation — if there were one for me — for comfort! I'll ask God if there is any comfort for me. (*Takes Bible, reads, trembling all over at first.*) 'Whosoever kills a man —'

*Pastor.* — No further, Ulrich. Let me read words of life to you, words destined for humanity, 'God does not wish the death of sinners, but he shall repent and live.'

*Forester (holding on to Bible firmly and freeing himself).* — Leave me, you — let me alone! (*Continues reading, he grows calmer and his voice grows calmer and steadier.*) 'Whosoever kills a man shall die.' (*Puts Bible aside.*)

*Stein.* — And such words comfort him.

*Pastor.* — Leave him the comfort that will console him!

*Forester (picking up Bible again; he regains strength, even cheerfulness).* — That is comfort, it is convincing and is a revelation. There is no 'But' or 'If' connected with it. 'Whosoever kills a man shall die'; that means that death will atone for and I'll be cleansed. (*Puts on hat and buttons coat.*) I'm going to give myself up to justice. (*About to go.*)

*Stein.* — And do you think they'll kill you?

*Forester (stops and turns around).* — They'll put me in jail — me? As they did to Leutner? He — Oh, I forgot, they do not judge aright, not according to these words in here — they in their courts. Oh, I ought to know! But — all right — (*Takes his gun.*)

*Stein.* — What are you about now?

*Forester.* — Nothing! I must have the gun with me as a proof. They are very particular in those things. — Farewell, Andres, Wilhelm — be good to mother. (*Shakes hands with all.*) Stein, — Sir Pastor — Robert, Sophie! — She has fainted. God will soon send her after me — Bury my child. Have all the bells rung; put her bridal wreath upon her coffin — Oh, I have become an old woman! — When we'll meet again I shall be no murderer. (*Waves his hands a last time.*)

*Stein.* — You are not going to —

*Forester (turns at door).* — Have my right — and then — (*pointing to heaven*) go to join my child. (*Exit.*)

*(Short pause during which all look after him in blank amazement and emotion.)*

*Stein (seized by a sudden understanding and apprehension).—* If the one barrel is still loaded — quick, hurry after him — *(A shot is heard from outside.)* Too late! I feared it!

*(The following almost simultaneously.)*

*Andres and Wilhelm (hurrying out).—* Father!

*Robert (stops at open door, when seeing all).—* He has his right!

*Stein (at door).—* His own judge a second time.

*Pastor (joining group).—* ‘As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee!’

CURTAIN

# ERINNA TO SAPPHO

FROM THE GERMAN OF MÖRIKE

*Translated by Charles Wharton Stork*

*(Erinna, the Greek poet, the friend and pupil of Sappho at Lesbos, died at the age of nineteen.)*

'Many the paths to Hades,' an ancient legend  
Tells us, 'and one thou, too, shalt travel, doubt not.'  
Doubt not! My sweetest Sappho, who can doubt it?  
Says not each day the same?  
Yet the foreboding word in a youthful bosom  
Lightly clings, as a fisher bred by the seashore  
Deafened by habit hears the thund'rous breakers no more.  
Strangely, however, to-day my heart misgave me: Listen;  
    Sunny the glow of morn-tide pouring  
Over the trees of my well-walled garden  
Roused the slug-abed (so didst thou chidingly nickname Erinna)  
Early up from her sultry couch.  
Full was my mind of quiet, although my blood beat  
Quick with uncertain waves o'er the thin cheek's pallor.  
Then as I loosed the plaits of my shining tresses,  
Parting with nard-moist comb on my leaning forehead  
Their soft veil — strange in the mirror my own glance  
    met me.

    Questioning eyes, I said, what seek ye?  
Soul that to-day within me dwellest securely enshrined,  
Secretly wed with my living senses,  
Daemon-like, half-smiling thy solemn warning  
Dost thou nod to me, Death presaging?

    Ha! All at once like lightning the thought went through me,  
Or as a deadly arrow sable-feathered whizzing, grazes the temples;  
So that with hands pressed tight o'er my face, a long time  
Dumb-struck I sat while my mind reeled at the frightful abyss.

    Then, at the first, dry-eyed I triumphed  
Over the fear of Death;  
But when I thought of thee, O Sappho,  
And of my comrades all

And of the poet's gift divine,  
 Straightway the tears ran fast.

But there on the table gleamed a beautiful head-dress, thy gift,  
 Costly handwork of Byssos, spangled with golden bees.  
 This, when we celebrate next the flowery feast-day  
 Honoring great Demeter's glorious daughter,  
 This to her will I offer on thy and my part  
 That she be kind to us both (for she much avaleth),  
 So that no mourning lock thou untimely sever  
 From thy beloved head for poor Erinna.

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## LONGING

*Translated from the German of* RICHARD DEHMEL

*By Paul H. Grumann*

And even in my parents' house,  
 At eventide I find no rest.  
 The rustling of the poplar boughs  
 With untold longing fills my breast.

I hear the door-latch gently lifted:  
 Mother with lamp in hand appears.  
 At once my longings all have drifted  
 Into that light which mother bears.

# DRAMATIC CRITICISM

BY ARTHUR SWAN

**W**HETHER a play is good or bad, the editor of the London *Times* informed his dramatic critic, John Oxenford, more than half a century ago, 'is of very little consequence to the great body of our readers, and I could not think of letting the paper become the field of argument on the point.' And Mr. Clayton Hamilton, last autumn, proffered the following explanation: 'The reason why most newspapers, and even many magazines, report plays as they report baseball games is that their publishers and editors honestly believe that the reading public does not care for scholarly and dignified and earnest criticism.'

This is part of the truth, no doubt. We have not gone forward quite so fast or so far during the last fifty years as one might wish to believe. It is not probable, however, that Mr. Walter Prichard Eaton's withdrawal, in the fall of 1908, from the staff of the paper for which he was dramatic reviewer, was immediately caused by his writing 'above the heads' of his readers; and the venerable Mr. Winter's resignation, a year later, from the journal he had served for more than two score years, was made obligatory, not solely because he had called Maeterlinck, Sudermann and Shaw 'sickly humbugs,' and had manifested his dislike for the art of Signora Duse and the morals of Mrs. Ebbsmith. Most thoughtful play-lovers will, perhaps, concur with Mr. Archer that 'there are in the literary world few more responsible positions than that of the dramatic critic of an influential daily paper.' But the theatrical reporter of to-day is answerable to a venal manager; and the most meretricious shows are very often the biggest advertisers. Musical criticism, of course, is on another plane.

Conditions in New York have been better than they are now. A decade, or little more, ago there could be named several dramatic critics that were writing for the daily press. When to-day, however, we have once paused to consider the difficulties under which the journalistic reviewers labor, we become less harsh and impatient with them. They are merely part of the relentless system of giving the public what it is supposed to want; individualistic they must never be. Why, for instance (ask some), do theatrical reporters try their worst to make fun of Ibsen? Because they can't make him out, most probably; but largely, too, because they believe the average reader can't, and it is he, of course, that the newspaper man always seeks to tickle; and besides, it is the easiest way out of the difficulty.

On the whole, the proletariat does not comprehend Ibsen and Hauptmann and Strindberg any more than it comprehends Shakespeare or Beethoven; and it is not unwilling to laugh at those that put themselves up, somehow, as superiors to themselves.

If one were forced to decide upon what was 'the event' of the season of 1911-1912 from a perusal of the files of half a dozen or more of the larger newspapers in New York, the winning production would be Weber and Fields's 'Hokey Pokey.' Most of the journals devoted about twice as much space to this remarkable production as is given to the première of a drama by Mr. Pinero or Mr. Thomas, and all of the reviews were prodigal of superlatives in trying to give the reader some faint notion of how unique and 'record-breaking' the really indescribable artistic success of 'Hokey Pokey' was! It was rather amusing, if it were not pathetic, to see how the reviewers rolled over one another in panegyricizing this show. There is no question of their sincerity; it was doubtless one of the happiest nights of their lives. And surely it ought to please every rational being to learn of the happiness of dramatic critics. But there was no need for all this praise (that is, apart from the advertising manager's standpoint); it was energy gone wrong. 'Hokey Pokey' was in the hearts of the million long before the reporters began to write. Jewish comedians, a 'pulchritudinous chorus' (a favorite phrase of the theatrical reporter), horseplay, ragtime — if these make up the newspaper reviewers blisssfullest hour in the theater, isn't it a bit unfair to expect him to write about the drama as Sarcey and Mendès wrote, or as Mr. Walkley and Mr. Eaton and Mr. Hamilton write to-day? . . . 'SPORTING and DRAMATIC' is the glaring head-line of one of the pages of the most widely read newspapers in New York.

There is, perhaps, more than one reason, therefore, why we must not demand dramatic criticism of the metropolitan journals. The American newspaper cannot be coerced into viewing the theater as does the Paris *Figaro*. Of our weeklies, only two conduct a regular dramatic column. The gossip commentaries, interspersed with the latest photographs of 'chorus-ladies' of one degree or another, that appear so superabundantly in our colorful magazines that sell for ten cents, and those that ought to sell for ten cents, are, of course, by the judicious, never mistaken for dramatic criticism. Rare indeed is the scribe, or sidewalk conversationalist, who, given the opportunity, does not feel himself quite capable of discussing the dramatic art. Yet it is in our better monthlies, of course, whether in regular departments or in occasional contributions, that we find our real criticism of the stage. Mr. Hamilton is doubtless in the right then when he avers that what our theater to-day is most in need of is dramatic criticism. If certain of our progressive universities would devote a little less energy to

teaching their students how to write plays and give a little more attention, instead, to instructing them how to appreciate and criticize the plays of others, the awakening in most cases would likely be less unhappy and the general outcome healthier and better for all concerned. . . .

In the last week of last February, for illustration, the following productions took place in New York: Monday evening,—Mrs. Fiske in a new play by Mr. Rudolf Besier; the first play of a new American author; four star actors in a dramatization of 'Oliver Twist.' On Tuesday occurred the first representation here of a comedy by Mr. Pinero, with Miss Gertrude Elliott as the heroine; on Wednesday, Mme. Simone in M. Rostand's 'La Princesse Lointaine'; on Thursday, a new piece by two American playwrights. Now on Monday evening the 'head theatrical reporter' could obviously review only one play; and he could not defer going to one of the other two premières, because on the three following evenings there were other openings. Editors don't like to print reviews of plays a day old; a production must be reported while it is 'hot,' or not at all. On the second Monday evening in March, to cite another instance, there were produced in New York four plays and an operetta. Thus, it needs no professional observer to discern, injustice is done both to authors and actors, and to managers too, since cubs' praise doesn't mean much or carry far.

Three or four dramatic weeklies are published in New York, but they are so-called organs of the theatrical profession, and can have, consequently, little or no interest for even the regular playgoer. In Paris they have a dramatic daily, *Comoedia*, which sells for a penny and has a large circulation. This excellent sheet, it may be as well to admit, is very far removed from the sporting-theatrical paper issued (at five cents) for a certain class in Manhattan. In Berlin there is published a dramatic semi-monthly, called *Bühne und Welt*. Being German, it is, of course, well printed and neatly put together. It contains short plays (occasionally), serious articles on dramatic literature, the theatrical art and music, and reviews of new plays and books at home and abroad. *Bühne und Welt*, be it observed, does not cater to the habitués of the music-hall; it does not print gossipy interviews with ingénue stars regarding what they eat and how they sleep. And it has managed to keep alive for some fourteen years.

Could not such a bi-weekly, with a fair start, be made to pay for itself in New York or Chicago or Boston? Is there any better or more feasible way in which we can foster our young dramatic art? Ought not something of this kind to be done for the specialist in the drama, writer and reader, as has already been accomplished with us for literature, art and music? Was Lowell right when he said that 'before we have an American literature, we must have an American criticism'?

# ‘THE BIRD OF TIME’

BY EDITH M. THOMAS

**U**NDER the above words as her title, borrowed from the Persian Omar, a little daughter of the Orient has gathered her latest contribution of song. A high British authority has characterized her work as ‘remarkable, opening a window through which the West may see the East if it will.’ In the introduction, which is from the pen of Edmund Gosse, there is a similar characterization, ‘luminous, in lighting up the dark places of the East.’ The same critic finds that the book offers, also, ‘sincere penetrating analysis of native passions and of the principles of antique religion and of such mysterious intimations as stirred the soul of the East long before the West had begun to dream that it had a soul.’

What the West perceives first through this ‘window’ is the wealth of characteristic East Indian garden-sweets: there are Champak blossoms, golden cassia, honey-birds, honey-blooms, and there are dulcet words in praise of Gulmohur blossoms. The singer has much to say of spring and of the stirrings of the human heart under the magic wand of this season:

‘Kamala tinkles a lingering foot  
In the grove where the temple-bells ring,  
And Krishna plays on his bamboo flute  
An idyl of love and spring.’

There are glimpses of color and movement, in kaleidoscopic change that vastly please the fancy in such pieces as ‘In the Bazaars of Hyderabad’ and the ‘Festival of Serpents.’ There are songs for childhood — such is an exquisite sleep-song for Sunalini; and there are love lyrics of so tender a cadence that only the spirit’s ear can gather the import:

‘In a latticed balcony  
How shall I woo thee, O dearest?  
With the delicate silence of Love.’

Sometimes, indeed, it is a love ‘sublimed’ — though expressed in terms of mortal endearment, that is meant; as in the rapt and beautiful feeling that pervades the ‘Song of Radha, the Milkmaid,’ wherein is invoked Krishna, the ‘Divine Beloved of every Hindoo heart.’ But whether read as mere folk-song or ballad, or as allegory of mystical passion, there is joy for the reader in this exquisite story of what happened when ‘I carried my gifts to the Mathura shrine.’



The author of the 'Bird of Time,' although educated in England and wonted to ways of Western thought, has yet a heart for the vanished or the obsolescent traditions and customs of her own land. For instance, there is felt the very ecstasy of self-abandonment, of a despairful desolation never to be assuaged, in the 'Dirge for Widowhood':

'What need hath she of loveliness,  
Whom Death hath parted from her Lord's caress.  
. . . Shatter her shining bracelets, break the string  
Threading the mystic marriage-beads that cling,  
Loath to desert a throbbing throat so sweet.'

The division of her poems called 'Indian Folk Songs,' is especially infused with this sympathy, with scenes and times and moods of her own familiar environments. But she who uplifts the noble native 'Hymn to Indra, Lord of Rain,' is no less able, in 'The Call to Evening Prayer,' to respond to the summons from the muezzin of Islam, the invocation of the fireworshiper, or that of the Christian Angelus: it is enough for her that all these, whether (as in India it may so chance), all together, or in widely sundered lands, shall still, in virtual accord,

'Lift up your voices in rapt adoration.'

For it is plain throughout this book, with its so varied strains, that a very religious spirit dwells in the breast of this young singer of ancient Hyderabad — this, and the love of beauty, and the yearning desire to do service to her human kind in songs of her making. She has resolved to live for this, in spite of the extreme delicacy of her health through a period of years, and in spite of the temptation to desire refuge, at times, with 'easeful Death,' through whom one may escape into griefless and painless metempsychoses. Read 'Death and Life,' wherein she so sweetly and with high resolve refuses the old allure that no youthful poet has failed, at one time or another, to meet:

'Death stroked my hair and whispered tenderly,  
"Poor child, shall I redeem thee from thy pain,  
Renew thy joy and issue thee again  
Inclosed in some renascent ecstasy. . . .  
Some lilting bird or lotus-loving bee,  
Or the diaphanous silver of the rain,  
The alluring scent of the sirisha-plain,  
The wild wind's voice, the white wave's melody?"'

The wooing voice (as one reads on) is resisted, and human life recalls her to its service. In 'The Soul's Prayer,' the same deeply religious note

is sounded, but urgent with questioning as to the 'Mystery of Things.' At length the soul is heard of its Lord — heard and answered in full:

'I, bending from my seven-fold height,  
 Will teach thee of my quickening grace:  
 Life is a prism of my light  
 And death the shadow of my face.'

With Sarojini Naidu, of Hyderabad, it must be remembered, that such expressions as 'renascent ecstasy,' or the 'seven-fold height,' are not the merely figurative language of borrowing Western poets, but are the significant symbols of an ancient faith, which is by no means an extinct faith, but is one which may yet blow a vital spark far beyond the bounds of India. Be that as it may, let us draw once more from the contents of this noble and unique volume. Let us hear the singer in the mystical and lofty-hearted annunciation of the faith that is in her. I know of no sweeter spirit of acquiescence, of Joy-in-Life, of exalted repose beyond molesting than that which breathes in the poem 'In Salutation to the Eternal Peace.'

'But I, Sweet Soul, rejoice that I was born,  
 When from the climbing terraces of corn  
 I watch the golden orioles of thy morn. . . .

'What care I for the world's loud weariness,  
 Who dream in twilight granaries thou dost bless  
 With delicate sheaves of mellow silences? . . .

'For my glad heart is drunk and drenched with thee,  
 O inmost wine of living ecstasy!  
 O intimate essence of eternity!'

However, no mere fragments, but the golden whole alone can fitly convey the treasures in this rare little volume. . . .

# SONG

FROM THE SWEDISH OF TOPELIUS

*Translated by A. Louis Elmquist*

Hear of song a little legend,  
Of the origin of singing;  
So the goodly Finnish people,  
So the hoary poets tell us:  
Sorrow is the source of singing,  
But the song relieves our sadness.

Far away in distant deserts,  
Wind-encircled, half forgotten,  
Lonely, stands a little cottage,  
Perched on precipices lofty,  
High above the inland waters.  
Low the cottage, tall the fir-trees,  
Loud the roaring of the waters;  
Mighty here the voice of nature.

Runotar, exalted songstress,  
Noble mother of all poets,  
Lives alone, aloof from plenty,  
Lives 'mid sorrow, and in longing,  
Happier than the child of fortune,  
Richer than a fairy-princess,  
Lonely, but not all so lonesome.  
Many a light and tripping footprint  
Over pathless wilds led thither;  
Heavier were the feet returning  
Homeward with a ceaseless yearning.

Came a merry youth one morning:  
'Peace to thee, renownèd songstress,  
Noble mother of all poets.  
Long I sought thee, far I wandered,  
Looked for thee in noisy cities,  
At the brim of gladdening goblets,

Sought thee 'mongst the rural pleasures,  
Looked for thee with endless longing  
In the eyes of many a maiden.  
Hear me now, exalted mother,  
Share with me thy gift celestial.'

Runotar, the reverend mother  
Of all poets, answered smiling:  
'If in vain you searched the cities,  
Vainly sipped from brimming beakers,  
Looked for me in vain with longing  
In the eyes of laughing maidens,  
What, pray tell me, brought you hither  
To my lonely inland waters,  
To these cheerless banks of heather?'

Said the youth: 'O, reverend mother,  
Let me tarry at thy fireside,  
Listen for a thousand summers  
To thy thousand songs in silence.'

Answered then the ancient songstress,  
Worthy mother of all poets:  
'Though you linger at my fireside  
Listening for a thousand summers  
To my thousand songs in silence,  
I cannot assuage your longing,  
Share with you the gift celestial,  
Fill your heart with inspiration.'

Then the youth replied in sadness:  
'Fain, O mother, would I listen,  
Gladly would I do thy bidding.'

Answered Runotar in wisdom:  
'Go alone into the desert,  
Shelter in your heart a sorrow.  
Soon the heart will cease its longing,  
Song will lend the soul contentment,  
Make your lips a flowing fountain.  
Sorrow is the source of singing,  
But the song relieves our sadness.'







